Père Jean-Dominique Fabre



Le père
Roger-Thomas Calmel

Un fils de saint Dominique au XXe siècle

Clovis

Father Jean-Dominique Fabre

Father Jean-Dominique Fabre o.p.

THE FATHER

ROGER-THOMAS CALMEE

1914-1975

A Son of Saint Dominic in the 21st Century

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According to Father Calmel’s express wish, certain documents that were not definitive could not be published as such. He wrote on December 12, 1954;

All the papers and notes that I can leave, I want them to be given to Mother Hélène (Claire-Marie) Jamet because she is the one who is best able to understand and correct them; many of these papers are not in their final form. She will dispose of them as she wishes.

Preface

Well known for his support of the Dominican teaching nuns of the Holy Name of Jesus in the organization of their principles of teaching and Catholic education and in their resistance to modernism, Father Roger-Thomas Calmel, a Dominican religious and priest, finally receives this biography, written by a friar preacher.

I will only mention two things about Father Calmel;

- First of all, there is the indelible memory of an uncompromising religious who preached a retreat (1974) to the seminarians of Ecône, strongly rooted in the doctrine of Saint Thomas, in which he strongly encouraged the hesitant not to make any concessions to the inventions of the “new religion”.

- And the clear affirmation that the persecution of faithful clerics and Catholics, and the “relegation” they feel from the “Conciliar Church” is a testimony, a martyrdom; to be a confessor of the faith at this time is a great honor that God gives us. Such a testimony is absolute. It is only possible if we are souls of prayer. Our position is only tenable if we have a martyr’s soul.

Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre held Father Calmel in high esteem. Associating the latter with Father Emmanuel, parish priest of Mesnil Saint Loup, the prelate wrote: “They are the two great spiritual authors of our time, they are profoundly Thomistic, which gives a solid foundation to their spirituality. “

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Let us discover in the course of the following pages the contemplative religious, the apostle, the priest, the formator of teaching nuns, the confessor of the faith and the spiritual mattyr, and the writer of ÿItineraries, the review which he contributed to making known and fruitful by his combative pen and his defense of the faith and of the Catholic Mass

Ecône, March 7, 2012.

Bernard Tissier de Mallerais Auxiliary Bishop of the Priestly Fraternity of Saint Pius X

Introduction

The one who lies in my arms like a laughing infant, and who cares for nothing,

and who sees the world in the eyes of his mother and his nurse, and sees it and looks at it only there, that one is pleasing to me, says God

Like all newborns, Roger Calmel discovered the world through the eyes of his mother, like a mirror. Now, on this May 11, 1914, what light was shining in the eyes of this young woman who had just given birth to her first-born? It was of course, in addition to the face of her son, the joy and pride of the new father, Mr. Matthieu Calmel, and then the house of Fourquiès, the estate, the fields and the laughing and promising countryside of spring. At once, M™ Héloïse also thought of the parish church of Sauveterre, located at the bottom of the hillside, at the bottom of the valley of the Lémance, five kilometers away, where the baptism would take place, the day after tomorrow. From there, his gaze widened to the whole country, to the Lot-et-Garonne so much loved, to its dark forests, its valleys, its old villages and its castles which spoke to all of the eventful history of the region.

Let’s follow the young mother’s gaze attentively to try to understand what her son Roger would later become. For his big black eyes were really born to see. From a young age, he knew how to observe the

1 - Charles PrSguy, Le mystère tiet saints Innncents, Œuvres compiètes, U Pléiade. 1967, p. 686.

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The future son of St. Dominic received from his country and from the people of his country a great deal of knowledge and wisdom. If it is true that a mature vine has ten kilometers of roots and rootlets, and that these determine its liveliness and richness, the future son of St. Dominic received from his country and his people a mark that explains much of the mission that God had in store for him in his Church. When he later preached on the family, on the healthy and balancing work of the land or on Christianity, Father Calmel spoke from experience.

The roots

ji his father’s school

Unfortunately, Mrs. Héloïse Calmel was in very poor health. She suffered from high blood pressure and heart problems, and always had to endure the harsh and uncertain life of the countryside. Moreover, when little Roger was born, she had the pain of not being able to breastfeed him. The isolation and poverty of the household almost put the child’s life in danger. “It was a neighbor, the mother of an infant, who saved the child before he could be taken to the city and placed with a nurse.

In spite of his poor health, M”” Calmel took care of the household with heroism, which was to grow with a second child, Jean, in 1916, and two others, Jeanne and Simon, after the armistice.

However, it seems that Roger Calmel was formed and impressed above all by the personality of his father. Indeed,

from the age of four, his father gave him the image of a Christian attached to his home and his land, of a true poor man, hardworking and generous, and above all of a man of faith.

It is appropriate to dwell a little on the figure of this deeply Christian father, so much did it influence that of his priestly son.

ncthieu Calmel. July 7

Father Roger-Thomas Calmel

The love of the home

At a time when many men were fleeing the joys and duties of family life, Matthieu Calmel showed a singular love for his family. In this respect, the letters he sent to his wife during the war are particularly eloquent. For the harshness of the separation only increased his affection for his family.

In April 1916, while hearing a song that praises the beauties of the wind, he cannot help but dream; "I thought; if I could go as fast as the passing breeze, I would be quick to you. For it is for this side that I have the most

Certainly, he was ready to give his life for his country, but the call of the home remained in him always very alive, more especially as he was victim of an illness which prevented him from fighting on the front;

I love France very much, and near you it seems to me that I would like it better. I would have liked to go all the way for her without fail, never. But the disease, the evil one, has lodged itself in my body and it seems to me today that it is only near you that I will find again, not perhaps all, but at least still some fragments of this youth that I tasted and that

I knew, so to speak, only with you, since I lived so little with these dear little angels

A year later, the soldier let pass all his tenderness as a husband and father, and his profoundly Christian spirit, in a letter that gives a beautiful image of the Christian life that honored the French countryside at that time;

My dearest wife.

Thank you for your good letter, thank you for the five franc bill. Little Roger must be very mischievous? If sometimes he causes you to get angry, he still makes you laugh with his whims.

If here, sometimes, I am ruffled like the bird in a cage, it is that undoubtedly I have suffering in the body, in the heart also like a bird prisoner and which must suffer much, when comes the spring to not be able to entrust to its bouquets of greenery and flowers, its love and its songs, it misses its nest.

O the nest so sweet and so tender that is the home, where small hands and young hearts attract thoughts, little cuties to whom nothing is missing, who are happy no doubt under the wing of their mother. J envy

3 - Letter of Matthieu Calmel to his wife. Tours, April 7, 1916.

This happiness that you have to embrace each day these chubby and naked arms. I cannot resolve, you see, to forget even for a few moments,

(,,,) It’s stronger than me, I could never get used to it, I will never get used to it and as long as I live, there will be room in my heart for you and for the beloved France.

(…) I would prefer, however, your sweet voice, or their tears, or the frank gaiety that we tasted in family, the pure gaiety that we both tasted. The pretty bouquets of flowers of the fields.

Those strawberries in the roses, and, his [sic] frolics so frank, so joyful in our meadows and woods. Those great days of happiness after the wedding, those much-loved cradles that I have only seen twice, how I love that. (…)

These Easter celebrations are close at hand, may these thoughts bring us closer to God and speak to us of hope and bring us closer to Heaven. Easter, which will find in our home the meadow dotted with daisies, the joyful bird and the trees in bloom; let us flower our souls with divine grace, pure as the lily. Let us give ourselves entirely to him who is the master of the world. Let us entrust ourselves to him, he will reunite us, and if many sincerely return to him, the world will certainly have peace again. I embrace you all, goodbye,

Calmel Matthieu’.

He writes at the same time:

I only want to think, I only want to live for the good, the true, the beautiful, the just, things that I love with all my strength. I know that you all replace me with these little flowers so delicate; little Jean (one year old), cute Roger (three years old), and that the purest respect surrounds them. But, Mom, watch! Take care of them. It is your duty to be the vigilant and strong mother, without reproach always, you will be thus, like so many others, admirable”.

This good farmer from the upper Agenais gave his wife and children the example of a deeply supernatural Christian life, but also of a tender and gentle charity, of a keen sense of the realities of the country and of war.

An artist’s soul

Matthieu Calmel’s love of the family home was adorned by a high poetic sense. He knew how to taste, while leading the animals, “the flowery meadows in

i - Letter from Matthieu Calmel to Faguières, August 27, 1917.

the freshness of the evening'". Later, at sunset "on a true spring day", he will write: "I admired many flowers, I saw swallows and new foliage: lime trees, hazel trees and lilacs, rose bushes, wild roses, all these trees have very tender leaves". Later, in the midst of suffering, illness and bereavement, he will find comfort both in the strength of the sacraments and in the wonders of nature:

We take the lambs to the fields. How beautiful. There are about twenty of them. They gambol around. It's a pleasure to see them having fun. They are all white, without spot. (…) God will give me some strength and I will walk. I will find the little squirrels very alert and I will be happy to see them jumping from one pine to another. May we see them and we will have one more joy*.

This good Christian who had such a hard life really had eyes to observe and a heart to admire. Spring, of course, had his preferences. After having sung the beauty of nature, he wrote from his sick chair:

We have big violets which embalm, yellow crocuses, dandelions, carpets of green grass. That it is delicious to see. The Providence does not forget to renew nature and I sigh and I shout that it is beautiful.

Ah if I had wings, if I could fly. (…) The apple trees have big buds ready to burst, violets, bells, carnations that are ready to bloom. What beauty in all that I see. But what is most charming is the birds. There came a group of dechenilleurs. They made two rounds. In the evening, there were about twenty of them. They came back the next day. It was

finished, but it [the apple tree] is completely weeded. Every year it blooms and bears big apples*.

And the farmer extends his letter with a detailed description of these famous feathered insecticides.

Moreover, Mr. Calmel's admiration for the beauties of nature was linked to a pronounced taste for literature. During his war campaigns and his convalescence stays in military hospitals, the soldier used to read poems and learn them by heart. On January 26, 1968, he could

6 - Letter from Matthieu Calmel to his son, Gagnol, August 5, 1935.

7 - Letter from Matthieu Calmel to his son, Gagnol, April 27, 1963.

8 - Letter from Matthieu Calmel to his son. Gagnol, April 3rd, 1965 9 - Letter from Matthieu Calmel to his son, Gagnol.

still quote to his son a long hymn to St. Teresa of Avila that he had learned fifty years earlier.

This was not uncommon in the region, as the customs of Christianity had been preserved. In the evening, after a hard day's work in the fields, people liked to meet at one or the other's house to tell each other nice stories. From 1932, unfortunately, there was a general decline in the level of these evenings which contributed so much, in the past, to the charm and beauty of social life: This last day we were seven herdsmen, and in the evening there was no shortage of conversation. We had a gramophone session where various songs were played. All this was not very interesting. But nevertheless, we were read, to close the evening, some

pages about Jasmin, his poetry, some stories of his life (and M, Calmel to tell here to his son a passage which amused him well). It was very interesting and I would have preferred a long reading than the rather too concrete songs. What was read to us about Jasmin was all in dialect

We can see in which school the future Father Calmel was trained and from which he got his Christian view of things as well as his love of literature.

By the sweat of your brow

It would be a mistake, however, to think of life in the rural home as an idyllic place for a gentle holiday. The city dweller, when he comes to the country, likes to rest in the shade of a lime tree, his face caressed by the soft evening breeze. It is legitimate, it is even very good. But for the farmer, the land is not only pleasant, it is also very serious. It is the place where the work of

When the young father acquired the Gagnol farmhouse after the 1914 war, it was in very poor condition. The house had only one large room with a low ceiling burned by smoke and no bathroom. The only source of heat was the large chimney, where the dishes were cooked. In the early days, it even rained inside. The farm was small. Wheat, barley and grass were grown for the cattle, a little vineyard for the house wine, and a few walnut trees completed the food supply. The cows of this breed, originally from Marmande, in the Lot-et-Garonne, gave little milk, but they were renowned for their good meat, and the oxen were willingly used for work, especially on the docks in Bordeaux, for the loading and unloading of goods. They were the pride of the farm. In

addition, there were a few sheep, one or two pigs and chickens.

This very small farm was enough to feed the household, provided the weather was good and they worked hard and skillfully.

The correspondence of Matthieu Calmel illustrates well the hard life of the peasant. According to the seasons, there is ploughing, sowing of wheat and oats, hay, bundles, vines to be planted and pruned, pine wood to be maintained, animals to be fed. 11 must fight on all fronts, all the more so as the economic crisis “obliges the generations that are not at all capitalists, who live only from their work, to strive for more economy, more attention, a better organization of work. The farmer makes fece; “We struggle, we work perhaps too physically, which prevents a greater moral progress. But it is necessary ‘h ” In this exhausting work, he is helped by his son Jean, “always very valiant”, of whom he is visibly proud;

Your brother, of an ardent nature, generous, hardworking to excess, docile to good influences. For a month I have been doing everything to moderate him, to advise him, not to leave him, I appreciate these qualities.

Nevertheless, never a complaint comes out of the Christian’s mouth. He sees the good side of things and devotes himself without counting the cost to his state duty. He even writes, not without humor, in response to a letter from Roger, then a seminarian in Toulouse:

12 - Letter from Matthieu Calmel i son fila, Gagnol, March 12, 1933.

13 - Letter from Matthieu Calmel 3 his son. Gagnol. May 29, 1932.

Your work is monotonous. Ours is very varied. Farm life is very interesting. You have to take care of a little bit of everything, the stables, the plowing, the woods, the beehives, the dovecote, the chickens, *etc.* I assure you that in the country we do not experience unemployment at all and that it seems to us that every day we have done nothing, so much so that we still have to do for the next day

Magnanimity

The Christian spirit of this peasant family is particularly evident in the ease with which they all render services to their neighbors. Far from shutting themselves up at home, they do not shrink from any effort to help others in need. M. Calmel seems to have shone particularly by this effective selflessness.

In October 1931, as soon as he finished the harvest, which announced a good wine, “but not very abundant”, he went to the hamlet of Fourquiès to help with the grape harvest, then he soon returned for the haying. Without delay, he began to collect chestnuts. And, despite the very small harvest, he thinks to the director of the house where his son is: “I will do my best to send a package to Mr. Superior. “

In the spring of 1932, when there was a lack of manpower in the area, instead of lamenting the bad times, the head of the family rolled up his sleeves:

Many neighbors are late because of the rainy weather, lack of manpower, illness. Also, three days I worked in other people’s houses.

The first day at Laulanier to sow the corn for him, one day at Carlos’ to plow the vineyard, one day at Mr. Fauvel’s for the dovecote ‘L

For having suffered a lot myself, I want to do something so that others suffer less than I do. I would like it to be recognized that those who are frankly Catholic know how to do better than others for the good of all

14 - Letter from Matthieu Calmel to his son. Gagnol, February 8, 1934.

15 - Letter from Matthieu Calmel to his son. Gagnol. February 25, 1934.

16 - Letter from Matthieu Calmel to his son, Gagnol, October 12, 1931.

17 - Letter from Matthieu Calmel to his son. Gagnol. May 29, 1932.

18 - Letter from Matthieu Calmel to his son, Gagnol, February 14, 1934.

The worst Roger-Thomas Calmel

Mr. Calmel's benevolence went, of course, to the poorest and most abandoned. Thus, one day, the farmer of Gagnol came down to the village with a good bag of grain for the bell ringer:

Tomorrow I am going to mass for the Cerveaux family. On my way there, I will carry the wheat and corn for the bell ringer. We mustn't forget him, this good man, who never misses his angelus, and who knows how to ring to divert the storms. It is the typically Christian unity between piety, fraternal charity and diligent work for one's own that appears in these lines.

For the Catholic faith is not a purely bookish concept. It is a life, it purifies and expands the heart and directs all

behavior. Here, for example, is how this authentic Christian saw social and economic relations;

I always practice that honesty which is above what would be right. And so peace is maintained. With hard work, together with your brother, we fight against the difficulties of life. To live in the midst of so many things, to administer them, not to use them, requires a lot of moral strength and a great love of God and the sincere will not to displease one's neighbor.

M”” Calmel herself, despite her poor health, did not hesitate to follow her husband's example by giving of her time and strength for others. She sometimes left the family home for two or three days, with her youngest children, to go to the hamlet of Fourquiès and cook for the elderly. Rightly concerned about the survival of the Gagnol farm, she does not see her husband devoting himself so easily to the service of others. But Matthieu Calmel's heart is so strong that he cannot see the misery of his neighbor without flinching. He himself apologizes for this in a letter to his son: We are taken every day to do service. We don't dare refuse. And sometimes we leave two. Until now, we have done Brice, Aillot, Girardel, Lesgranges, Fourquiès, Boulogne, Bartal, Fonsalade. Tomorrow, the Buquet-Bas, remains Buquet-Haut, Guillouty. We also helped Carlos. Everyone addresses us. I do not know why. We

19 - Letter from Matthieu Calmel to his son, Gagnol, January 11, 1933.

20 - Letter from Matthieu Calmel S to his son, Gagnol, March 11, 1935.

21 - Letter from Matthieu Calmel to his son, Gagnol, March 12, 1933.

The roots

are, I believe, the only ones where all the neighbors come to ask for help. Our work may suffer a little. Your mother does find a little. But we bring a lot of good will. We encourage her to wait another three or four days. Our turn will come to pick, and it will be over for a year.

God visibly blesses such generosity:

Our works worked anyway. We planted turnips, cabbages at Carretals, about six thousand. Many this year did not have plants. We had the advantage of having many. We carried the wood to the sawmill to make the barrel. Because the harvest looks good. (…) This morning, before going to Bathal, we cleaned the hives, they were full of good honey.

I brought a present to the neighbors. I sold Fromente's calf. 11 was very beautiful. 11 weighed about 116 kg.

(…) Finally, we are all in good health. We have a lot of work, but we have courage

Prayer life

Where does this man, weakened by the aftermath of war and often ill, find such ardor in his work? In faith and in prayer. A simple and authentic piety animates his whole day, his joys and his sorrows. Every day, especially in the evening of his life, he reads the Mass in his missal, as well as the Rosary Magazine. Every year, in spite of his great fatigue, he did not omit to celebrate St. John's Day: "six fires, sounded by the bugle, and we jumped over them. I said the prayer aloud, it was answered devoutly and, after wishing each other a good night, we slept well". Of course, the whole small world of Gagnol goes to the Corpus Christi procession, and, as much as possible, we participate in the diocesan pilgrimage of Our Lady of Peyragude

22 - Letter from Matthieu Calmel to his son, Gagnol, August 8, 1934.

23 - Letter from Matthieu Calmel to his son, Gagnol, March 11, 1930.

24 - Letter from Matthieu Calmel to his son, Gagnol, June 29, 1930.

people at all the masses. Leglisc was full. A very beautiful procession. We sang hymns to the Virgin. There was much simplicity, much piety. Everyone breathed peace. “(Letter from Matthieu Calmel to his son, Gagnol, May 21, 1963)

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Above all, prayer accompanied daily life and the heavy work of the farm. For perhaps more than anyone else, the farmer feels his dependence on the Master of heaven and the seasons:

We are all well. Tomorrow the priest will say mass for the crops. We will pray to God to keep them for us. Because you know, I’m not like Grandpa or Matilda. I rely more on God than on money. Money is not my strength. A year without harvest would make us very unhappy*.

Since your departure, I have been drawing heavily on the wallet, which this time is very small. I often ask the good Lord for health, wisdom, prudence and patience. But I must also ask Him for a little more temporal goods. Jesus will not refuse. Having come out of an accident safe and sound, the good Christian immediately raises his heart to the Father of all gifts. And when the spring of 1966 was late in coming, Matthieu Calmel, bedridden with congestion, raised his soul to Heaven; It is cold (…). May the good Lord send us his sun

and we will be happy, the birds will sing, the morels will grow, joy will be in

The time does not want to shine. May the good God manifest himself, for we are suffering a lot".

Already in 1932, the freethinkers and rationalists were trying to spread their errors among the people of the countryside. They found in M. Calmel a deep faith that stood above the chimeras of modern thought. The reaction of good sense and Christian intelligence of the father already announced the fierce anti-modernism of his son:

On Sunday, a little before vespers, I had a conversation with a person who told me that competent people had told him that we were going to change our religion, because. as we were taught, we were mistaken. There was no proof that Our Lord had come in 1932 at Christmas in Sauveterre. He told me that the science of prehistory was not to destroy religion but to strengthen it.

26 - Letter from Matthieu Calmel to "n son, Gagnol, May 29, 1932.

27 - Letter from Matthieu Calmel to his son, Gagnol, January 11, 1933.

28 - Letter from Matthieu Calmel to his son. Gagnol. December 9, 1933.

29 - Letter from Matthieu Calmel to his son, Gagnol, April 22, 1966.

30 - Letter from Matthieu Calmel to his son, Gagnol, April 28, 1966.

As for me, I don’t care if our first ancestors had different skulls from the men who lived in the Savior’s time. I admit the mysteries. I believe firmly. I have had so much evidence of the Savior’s mercy and love. In the terrible trials I have been through, so much physical and moral pain that he (in which he?) has comforted me. I know very well that if men make mistakes, He, my God, does not make mistakes, and that He delights in consoling and loving faithful souls of good will. Therefore I am not worried because my heart always beats full of love for my God, Jesus my Savior. However, the common life, on the heights of Gagnol and Fourquics, is not easy. In addition to the extreme economic poverty, family enmities and jealousies poisoned the neighborly relations. Often, the impatience and susceptibility of the fallen nature must be curbed. It is in prayer and in the example of the saints that Matthieu Calmel draws the strength to overcome evil with good;

You are not very successful in your apostolate. Perhaps it seems so to you. In the terrible struggles that I have always sustained to defend and make good triumph, how many insults I have had, how much suffering I have endured. But I have never changed. I fight, I hold, I wear down the enemy. I pray and little by little, around me, I notice some improvement. On a difficult night, a very sick family member suffered a serious crisis during which she violently insulted, for a long hour, Matthew Calmel and his family. The reaction of the Christian was admirable. It is that of a soul who sees everything in the light of faith and who forgives with a good heart:

The blessed hours that the good Lord has made to remake the body and the spirit are sometimes disturbed by ugly whims. On Saturday, at about 2 a.m., without anything being able to predict it, they poured out on us waves of lies, hatred and malice. Never before had I suspected that

materialism and greed could penetrate hearts and bodies to the point of making the mind completely unreasonable and the body completely upset. For the face reflects the vice that is painted on it. I placed a few rare words to the storm that lasted maybe an hour. I prayed, I told Heloise to pray. I prayed heartily, I did not have the least trouble. When I woke up.

31 - Letter from Matthieu Calmel to his son, Gagnol, February 11, 1933.

32 . Letter from Matthieu Calmel to his son, Gagnol, March 12, 1933.

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I kindly gave a beautiful orange. Gave devoted care as to a little child without the slightest grudge".

The testimonies about Matthieu Calmel and his correspondence give us the image of a Christian with solid virtues and a simple faith. He certainly had his rough edges and his struggles, but he was a hard worker and resigned, a prodigal and merciful heart, a man where nature and grace form one life in the service of God and neighbor. Two expressions seem to us to sum up the farmer's message to his son, a message expressed by word and writing, certainly, but above all by daily life: Work, pray, love always much, much, the little ones and the humble.

I am sincerely glad you are calm at work. That's what it takes.

I have the experience: calm, patience, perseverance, tenacity, absolute trust in God".

This is the summary of a life. This was the school in which Roger Calmel received the first rudiments of the Christian life. And this image of the father, his word of wisdom, his love of the land and his intensely lived faith marked the young preacher for ever. For true fatherhood is not only that of the body. It is that of virtue and faith, that of balance and perseverance, that of daring in the face of danger and that of generosity. Moreover, one feels in the letters of Mr. Matthew to his Ris the joy and pride of finding in the latter, multiplied tenfold by the grace of the vocation, the deepest joys and thoughts of his soul. Following a letter “so clear, so luminous” from his brother, the father answers not without emotion: “It consoles me, encourages me, does me good. These are the same ideas as mine. Your heart is like mine ^. “

The advice and good examples he had set ^ “

beautiful fruits, and U knew from now on the ,o.e all p “emelle to be exceeded by the one that Ü had raised to the pnx of so many sufferings.

3.t - Uttn: of Muthicu Calm ^

Vl - Letter from Matthieu Calme f Gagnai, February 14, 1934.

35 - Letter from Matthieu Calmel * ^ Gagnol. 15 January 1936.

36-Letter from Matthew Calmelàs””

to understand the future father Calmcl. For a son worthy of this not only the heir of his close family, but also of his fathers, of those who built and civilized the country and who fought for the < Two things seem to have marked particularly the character i Calmel: the wisdom of the peasant and the necessity of the fight for the city ch

The wisdom of the earth

The farm of Gagnol and the hamlet of Fourquiès stand on the which dominate the valley of the Lémance, in the Haut-Agenais. Sauveterre-la-Lémance is located at the limit of Quercy and Périgord

I,r father Roger-Thomas Calmel

iiuliisiil.illsécK î ():)r in spite of the rusticity of the life, one liked the beauty of the countryside, the fresh air, the right freedom which supports the life of the spirit and peace.

Even today, the last representatives of this generation allow us to guess the happiness and the wisdom of the farmers of that time. The farmer will tell you that she does not regret anything. “I mustn’t complain. I am well enough. There’s nothing more, but we have fresh air. We are not bad. What do you want, life is so easy, you have to take it as it comes. Today, there are only three young people (that is to say, about fifty years old!) In the past, there were many. We used to help each other. “And yet, M““Georgette Calmel, Jean’s wife, had three patients to take care of at home, including her father-in-law, Matthieu Calmel, who was a victim of a cerebral congestion that confined him to bed. In addition to cooking and farm work, she had to go down to the washhouse at the bottom of the hill every day, carrying a bag of laundry on her head and another under her arm, and then bring up the laundry weighed down by water. “But, she will tell you, in life, you have to fight, you have to walk and not let yourself go. We were young, we had to work. “

This agricultural population has suffered a lot, certainly, but it has shown an extraordinary strength and wisdom.

Father Roger-Thomas Calmel remained attached all his life to these treasures of generosity and good sense which seemed

to be born and grow as if naturally from the place and the circumstances. He always kept a strong love for the country where he was born and grew up. Moreover, if he had wanted to, the good Pete could not have hidden his origin, so much his accent was marked. Often, the unaccustomed ears had to make him repeat, so much he rolled the “r” and typed the finales. And it is said that he liked to cultivate this inimitable accent.

It seems that Father Calmel has especially retained from his native country, the profound wisdom of the land. To be wise, in fact, is to know the depth of things, not only in a bookish way, but by taste, as by connaturality or by instinct. Then, it is to order, to discover the order that God has put in his works and thus to place each thing in its place. Finally, the wise man has a gift for judging, for calling good what is good and bad what is bad.

Let’s let Gagnol’s son speak, when, much later, he had the joy of returning to the country. First of all, he sings about the wisdom of experience and life that comes from this secret love of the things God does:

And if by chance you have the chance to meet one of these peasants who have spent their lives as in the time of Hesiod or Virgil, but

illuminated by the light of Christ, nourished by his sacraments and devotees of Our Lady, if you have conversed with them, you will have been struck by the contemplative density of their words. The speech of these peasants

unable to contain a word that is not nourished by reflection on their art, or on the human condition, or on the revealed mysteries of the Lord God, what treasures of finesse, of humility, of simple docility to the laws and limits of beings

and things. What they tell you about the tried and tested traditions of pig or sheep breeding, about the way to repair walls along the road, about the preservation of good seeds, about the different depth of ploughing according to the different nature of the sowing, all this reveals a lot of sensitivity and heart.

Listening to them you understand that the work of the fields is for them a true art: that it is never isolated from a contemplative source; it is even impossible that this denaturation could occur. Their whole life was occupied by external action, by cultivation and breeding - and first of all by the maintenance and the government of their family -, but their life was not given up to the primacy of action. Not only were they not heeled by the timetable, not only did leisure occupy a good place, but above all they carried within them, they spontaneously safeguarded a background of recollection and meditation"...

Then, the knowledge that springs from love and life leads to the discovery of the order of things, it engenders a deep respect for nature and a taste for work well done. It is up to the wise man to order:

When we cross for example one of these small Languedoc villages, when our glance at the bend in the path, discovers an old farm or an old chapel, it is enough for us to look with a little attention to admire the safety, the intelligence, the solidity of these rustic architectures. Everything has been done with wisdom, laid with love, as well the frame as the fittings, as well the stones of the threshold as the bricks of the door frame. It is said that a very refined, very vigorous spiritual sensitivity lived in these craftsmen, that they had inherited immense treasures of wisdom and that they had not dispersed them".

However, the peasant is not a dreamer. He knows too well that he has no right to make mistakes and that his negligence would put the lives of his people in danger. For nature

37 - “The Contemplation of the Saints”. Itinémires n” 76, September-October 1963. p. 184.

38 - “The Contemplation of the Saints”. Itinéraires n’ 76. September-October 1963.

and the click is sometimes even cruel. The winegrower fights against mildew, the farmer foresees drought and myxomatosis in rabbits. U is constantly on the alert. He knows that the enemy lurks and that he is merciless. His wisdom goes that far. And it is certainly in his peasant roots that Roger Calmel drew his lucidity and vigilance in matters of faith. It was in Gagnol, first of all, that he received a love of truth and life that went as far as hatred of error and the poison of souls. It is up to the wise to judge.

Here is how the wisdom of the farmer was expressed during a visit to the country: I have just gone through a part of the property, going through paths where I had not passed for forty-five years… In half a century, how the wasteland has won ! How the use of big tractors has modified this countryside which is not at all comparable to the great expanses of the “Netherlands”! The ancestral wisdom of the farmers of this country led them to cultivate only small enclaves of good land in the middle of large woods on the hillsides. If this limit were accepted even now, there would be a certain prosperity. To accept it would require much more than rinielligence, even more than independence of

character: it would require a modest way of life, like that of Nazareth.

The small vineyard that I used to dig with my brother during the Easter week is now a wasteland, a fertile wasteland if one can say so, because the land, in this area, is not as sterile as a causse: another vineyard where I used to help my father when he planted it has become a wood of young pines. Of course, the big tractors had nothing to do in these enclosures; one does not cultivate a flower garden with bulldozers

The fight for the Christian city

Another lesson awaited Gagnol's son, beyond the hills that blocked the horizon. As soon as you go down into the valley and drive around a bit, you will discover towns and villages that are, written in stone letters, real history books. Already Sauveterre-la-Lémance has an imposing XVth century castle, and Saint-Ftont-La-Lémance a fortified church which remind everyone of the perils of the religious wars. All around, there are villages huddled around their castles, most of them more than six hundred years old. Cuzorn and Sauveterre were built during the Hundred Years' War, Bonaguil and Biron date from the century that followed. Gavaudun

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presents the imposing and very representative spectacle of its high walls in the shape of a nave, perched on a rocky peak. It is in this commune that the monastery of Saint-Sardos, dependent on the abbey of Sarlat, was established at the end of the XI'century. The magnificent priory was burned down on November 25, 1569 on the initiative of the innkeeper, who was a Protestant, and Martin Rigal, the only

cleric remaining within the walls, was burned alive. From the 1560s on, the population remained predominantly Protestant for more than a century.

Another witness of the past was dear to the Calmel family as well as to all the diocesans of Agen: the sanctuary of NotreDame de Peyragude, where the Virgin Mary, on her rock, has watched over the country for more than a thousand years.

A place of Marian worship is attested since before the year 1000. In 1212, Simon de Montfort's crusade against the Albigensians led to the terrible siege of Penne-d'Agenais, at the end of which the castle and the chapel were totally ruined. Saint Dominic, who followed the crusade to preach there, must certainly have prayed to Our Lady here. In 1563, during the terrible wars of religion, the troops of Biaise de Montluc besieged Penne-d'Agenais again and ruined the chapel. In 1653, the plague ravaged the country, after the floods of the Garonne. The aldermen of Penne climbed the hill and vowed to rebuild the chapel and to come there in procession every August 15. The vow and the prayers were answered and the plague miraculously stopped. In 1794, the revolutionaries completely destroyed the chapel, but thanks to the sagacity of a Christian, the little statue was saved from being plundered. In 1849, a small sanctuary was rebuilt. Since then, numerous graces have manifested the desire of Our Lady to be honored in this place.

It was therefore first in the walls of the villages and in the sanctuaries of his country that little Roger Calmel learned his first pages of the history of France and of the Church. Everything around him bore witness to the battles of which the region had been the scene during the Hundred Years' War, the Wars of Religion and the Revolution. From his first steps and his first runs in the sunny countryside, the child

understood that life was serious, that faith and Christianity were such noble realities that they mobilized all of man’s vital forces. The ancients had gone so far as to give their lives to save faith and country, altars and homes, pro ans etfocis.

Is it any wonder, then, that the life of St. Dominic’s son was, thereafter, an unceasing struggle for the defense of truth and Christian life? For the struggle for life and for the country had been purified and, as it were, transfigured, in him as in his ancestors, by the waters of baptism.

Father Roger-Thmis Cdmel

FibeU the Church

Born on May 11, 1914, the eldest of the Calmclfi family was baptized on the 13th. 11 received the name of Roger.

The church of Sauvetctrc-la-Lémance is of neo-gothic style. Today it is decorated with statues of the great French saints, Saint Theresa of the Child Jesus and Saint Joan of Arc, and those of Saint Bartholomew, Saint Anthony of Padua and Blessed Jean-Gabriel Perboyre. The central window represents the Sacred Heart. Above all, the parish church owes its architectural interest to a very beautiful medieval side chapel, NotreDame de Capelou, enriched with very old frescoes and a beautiful Piety. How difficult it was, in these humble village churches, to believe in the communion of saints! Even before he knew it, the child was welcomed by a big family of big brothers and sisters who smiled at him and talked to him about Heaven.

What happened, on that great day, in the soul of the newly baptized? But Father Calmel remained all his life very marked by the grace of his baptism. In his talks, in the ministry of confession, in his oral or written preaching, he

constantly returned to the blessed day of baptism. A few months before he died, in a talk given to Dominican novices, he emphasized the great grace of that day and the daily support of our holy protectors. These, he said, “help us to be faithful to the grace of our baptism. (…) The older we get, the more we feel that this is the only thing that matters: to be found faithful to the grace of our baptism’*®. “

As soon as age and health permitted, the little boy went every Sunday with the family to Sunday mass. At first we walked the five kilometers, then later we rode our bikes. We also went to the Corpus Christi procession in the village. An old woman remembers the baker, a little wild, who did not ptadise, but who said: “When I see a priest, I respect him, because I recognize him by his habit. “

The children followed the atheism at the church of Sauveterre, on Thursdays at 11:30 am, assured by Mr. the priest. Sometimes, he would go up to Gagnol. He would then visit the families of the area and invite himself for lunch.

The memories which have come down to us about the parish priest of Sauveterre-la-Lémance are very brief. We know that he was a good priest, a true pastor

40 - Confirmed to the novices, Sainr-Flé, Biignoles, December 30, 1974.

who loved his sheep and led them to Heaven. However, to get an idea of the clergy who guided little Roger Calmel in his first steps on the path of Christian life, there is no lack of historical information. We will listen to one of the witnesses of that time, who later conquered the enthusiasm of Father Calmel, Ernest Psichari.

After his final conversion in 1912, the cavalry lieutenant of the Cherbourg regiment became acquainted with the

Norman clergy. He was immediately won over by the paternal cordiality of these parish priests, by their life turned towards Heaven, by their high intellectual level and by their simple hospitality. He was already thinking of writing a book entitled The Precious Role of the Clergy in Society, in which he planned to include a study of the Curé of Ars.

Psichari's testimony is of interest to our study insofar as it extends to the parish priests of the Périgord and Lot-et-Garonne regions where the Calmels were born and grew up. In 1913, while stationed in Cherbourg, he made a vast campaign in the Southwest, passing with his soldiers through these beautiful regions. At that time, "he asked as a favor to be lodged with the parish priest. He was concerned about the needs of the parish, the mentality of the inhabitants, inquired about works or patronages in progress or in formation," "

The young convert was seized with a lively admiration for the pre-war French clergy, "I have seen," he wrote to the parish priest of Mussidan, "only good and holy priests, and this clergy of France, I have come to know and admire" "'L" Above all, he noted "the devotion and intellectual labor" of the priests he had met. "In our French countryside," he said, "the only house that serves as a refuge for the life of the spirit is the presbytery.' "

To another priest, Psichari said;

What about our clergy? Many Catholics - and not the least - find it good to pout when we talk about priests, the priests of Jesus Christ! One day I will have to say what you people cannot say. I will have to say, if God gives me the strength, that this clergy is admirable, that it is imbued with the most masculine Christian virtues, that it is greater perhaps than it has ever been.

41 - Testimony of Major Charpentier, in A.-M. Goichon, Ernest Psichari d'apris des dacuments inédits, Louis Conard. 1933. p. 300.

42 - Letter to Abbé Reygeaud. in A.-M. Goichon. op. cU. p. 301. ii-Ibid.

summer. In the village as in the city, the presbytery is the only place where intelligence takes refuge - for I do not call by this name the poor depraved intelligence of the "intellectuals" - the only place where there is really life, the only place where one is assured of always finding, not only men of heart, but men having the finest understanding of all things, the most upright sense, the most deft reason. It is said that there are no more saints today. Ah! if the Church would allow me, I would say Wen that there are still some, and where they are"!

Under the high guidance of St. Pius X and good bishops, the French clergy, in its great majority, took advantage of the condemnations and vexations of the Third Republic to intensify its intellectual and spiritual life. Roger Calmel benefited greatly from this profound and simply supernatural climate that the priests created in their parishes.

These were a gift from Heaven to prepare the Christians for the calamities of war that were to befall France.

The levees of war

The joyful song of nightingales, blackbirds and finches welcomed the birth of Roger Calmel. "It is the month of Mary, it is the most beautiful month", says the hymn. Certainly, but in this year 1914, spring was charged with a

terrible threat, that of war. Newspapers, speeches and forecasts said that war was inevitable. We were heading at high speed towards a world cataclysm.

It was in this climate that the eldest of the Calmels was born and that he lived throughout his first four years. It is true that the pleasant valley of the Lémance was not torn apart by shells like the vast plains of Lorraine or Picardy. But the men had been mobilized and were fighting far away. In the country, people were waiting for news that was slow in coming. Every day, we feared to see the heartbreaking dispatch announcing the death of a son, a husband or a father. We lived in latmes, in anxiety and in the uncertainty of tomorrow. And yet life went on. The women and the elderly had to take over, work double shifts and take care of the children.

Little Roger did not need long catechism lessons to understand that this land is a valley of tears and the place of the “thou shalt work by the sweat of thy brow” of Genesis. The absence of his father and the terrible

i - Letter to Abbé Toumebise, in A.-M. Goichon, op. cit. p. 301-303.

The news that one received from the front, and the years themselves that followed the armistice of 1918, marked the character of the child a lot. These human plagues asked him very early on the serious questions to which he would later try to answer: What is human life? What is France? What is Christianity?

A hecatomb

The war of 1914-1918 is presented at first under its most hideous light, that of an inhuman mass grave. The soldiers who survived these terrible battles remained discreet about the horrors they had experienced, as one keeps silent about an unmentionable nightmare. But the few direct testimonies that have come down to us are enough to seize us with dread. The waves of infantrymen going up to attack the German lines and greeted by machine gun salvos, the shredded bodies of the dead or wounded hanging from the barbed wire like old linen, nicknamed for that “the hangers”, the toxic gas. In the din of the fighting, writes an officer, “we walk on corpses and heaps of corpses; fragments of brains, tufts of hair on shreds of skin hang here and there from the parapets. (…) When the burst of four or six 210 shells arrives on a point, it is an earthquake in the darkness and in the fire. (…) These are minutes of the end of the world ■‘h” “Poor France!” wrote the commander of the Plessis. Never has such devastation been seen anywhere… Here the fire has burned to the very bowels of the soil…. The earth is ploughed, searched, torn to its depths over immense areas, burned by noxious gases whose fetid smell seizes the throat. Hell has really come to day ‘h “

It was a far cry from the peaceful work of the Gagnol hillsides. And yet, this was the sad reality that affected the French to the very core of their bodies. All the more so since, in addition to these physical ailments, there were also those of the hearts and souls. One soldier had just learned of the death of his wife and his last son, while he had to go up to the assault with the strong presentiment of not coming back and of leaving a three and a half year old son behind. Another, when he returns home, finds the house empty because his wife has left home. And all the dead leave a crowd of widows and orphans.

45 - Tony Catra. Paths of Grace: Joachim du Plessis de Grenédan. 1870-1951. Éditions de Bclltfontainc. Arccis. 2008. letter of June 17, 1915.

46 - October 4, 1918. A very symbolic fact: in these devastated regions, it was

ï had to wait!

Father Roger-Thomas Calmel

The figures are there, in fact, to give an idea of the real hecatomb that decimated Europe. If it is very difficult to estimate the number of civilian victims of the conflict, the number of soldiers is better known. One million five hundred thousand French soldiers died at the front or from their wounds, while Germany lost one million eight hundred and sixty-five thousand soldiers (including the Eastern Front). In the battle of the Somme alone, in 1916, during the great offensive of July 1, 120,000 soldiers went into battle, the majority of whom were British from the British Expeditionary Force. By the evening, 60,000 were out of action, including about 20,000 dead. One can imagine the effect of such news on the population.

Was such a bleeding of the young and hardworking population inevitable? An example that particularly struck Father Calmel will suffice to answer, that which cost the life of this officer whom he would later consider a saint, Ernest Psichari^l The latter was then serving in the 2’ colonial artillery regiment, commanded by General Rafifenel. For the units, August 19-21, 1914 were spent in orders and counter-orders, in sudden departures and indecisive stationing, without being able to eat or sleep properly. They were given false information: the enemy would be twenty or twenty-five kilometers away. However, in the villages, the Belgian

population reported fires in the Ncufchàteau forest and Uhlans everywhere. The Germans had made important requisitions, “there are some in the forest”. The staff replies that the Belgians see Germans everywhere…

In spite of everything, the French troops were pushed forward on the roads, in the open, in broad daylight. Of course, they were easily counted by low-flying German planes.

On the 22nd, marching order: “Today, a march of 33 kilometers. Arrival at Neufehâteau at 11 o’clock. Cantonment. No encounters to be expected. “

At 6:30 a.m., the battle begins. A squadron of the 6’ dragoons was sent, sabre in hand, to face the German positions. It was annihilated by enemy bullets. The captain then sent a bill to General Montignault: “It is impossible to advance. The enemy is there in force. “No matter! The orders from the general staff arrived, tight and formal: “Do not stop. The enemy is 35 kilometers east of Neufchàteau. “

■(7-HenrinKPsichiii.fnaBfliiliffi jmb/Ai-. p. 224-231.d’après Iclivrc du colonel Grasset, id surfntr il uni dmsm, Roiàpal-Sma-Vmnil, Bergcr-Lcvtault. 1932.

The cavalry was sent in, but was unable to advance. Then the 1 ” and V regiments of colonial infantry were thrown into the forest to pass at all costs. They charged with bayonets. General Raffenel saw his soldiers massacred, but he insisted on going through. Battalion commanders were killed, captains and lieutenants, who were easily identifiable thanks to the gold braids on their kepis. It was a merciless slaughter. Psichari’s regiment was then ambushed, receiving shells from the east and the south. Everyone knew that there was still time to retreat, and General Raffenel’s orders

were repeated: “We must hold on to Rossignol at all costs, while awaiting reinforcements, which would not be long in coming. “The men knew that they would not arrive.

At 4 p.m., the Germans attacked the burning village of Rossignol. The losses were countless, it was a mass grave. Colonel Guichard Motguers told General Raffenel that the losses were appalling, that reinforcements could not arrive, and asked him to withdraw his regiment further south. “No, it was at Rossignol that he had to hold out,” the general replied. The information arrived, urgent and precise. At one point, the general disappeared. They looked for him, but he was no longer there. His body was found only in the evening, near an embankment, with a mysterious head wound. Many soldiers cried treachery and said that he had been sold…

Despite the certain defeat and the lack of support from the men, Ernest Psichari wants to go to the end of his mission as a Christian priest. He goes everywhere to encourage and appease the men. 11 takes his friend Cherrier to the first aid post. When he returned, he was shot at point blank range by a German soldier. We are on August 22, 1914.

This tragic end was unfortunately only one case among thousands. In a remarkable article published in 1968, Father Calmel showed his indignation:

Bernanos, who had been mobilized during the entire 1914-1918 war, who knew the amount of Christian heroism that had been spent during four years, in the depths of the muddy trenches or in the terribly murderous attacks, Bernanos, who had returned from the front, never admitted the silence or the blindness of those who should have understood and spoken. It was the duty of the “bienpensants” and of the priests to show the Christian face of so many sacrifices and to accuse the system which was at

the origin of these slaughters. The State Jacobinism imposed on France and, partially, on most other countries by

the Revolution of ‘89, the totalitarian conception of the State made possible universal conscription, the mobilization of entire peoples and unprecedented killings. All this would have been unthinkable under a Christian monarchy*.

Many of the officers of that generation had been trained according to the principles of the Third Republic, which a few years earlier had persecuted the Christians and flouted the laws of the Church. Politicians and some senior officers saw the war as a kind of election campaign for the glory of the reigning ideology. The more people died, they believed, the happier the ruling party would be and the more anticlerical France would prove its prestige. In the “creutes” of the Chemin des Dames, the place where the meetings of the American Freemason generals were held from July 1918 onwards is still visible today.

A propitiatory sacrifice?

The example of Psichari, which was so dear to Father Calmel, is symbolic. A Christian officer of great piety, a Dominican tertiary, after having performed a last act of charity and having returned to combat to defend an indefensible place, offers his life, rosary on his wrist, during a confrontation that ends in disaster because of the fault of the French leaders, during a war whose deep motive was the destruction of Catholic Europe. Did such an apparently absurd situation make sense?

First of all, it should be noted that the horrors and errors of the Great War did not destroy the loyalty and Christian spirit of many soldiers. On the contrary, the evils of war awakened

many slumbering consciences and provided the opportunity for a true movement of conversion and penance. On the other hand, if many were only fighting to recover Alsace and Lorraine in a very human vision of things, and if the sufferings of the war were often used as a pretext to forget God and to seek relief in pleasure, a good number of Christians hoped for a resurrection of Catholic France from this conflict.

Major du Plessis, for example, expects a general upheaval in Europe from which would start “the redemption of France, the triumph of the Church, the triumph of the Sacred Heart and of the King of France, his servant ■”, U

48 - “U pretre n la Réroliidon”, Iliomim n” 127, November 1968, p. 38.

49 - Tony Catta, dp. lil. p. 130.

wrote to his son of his faith in the triumph of our arms, “in the coming of the reign of God, in the bosom of a great peace - the Catholic and French peace * “. We sc

was therefore “the dawn of salvation for France and the reign of Jesus Christ”.

Like many soldiers, he saw in the horrors of combat the suffering willed by God for the reparation of France’s sins and for its renewal.” “I have entered the harsh life of the great penance,” he wrote to his wife on June 16, 1915.

The same spirit animated Ernest Psichari: “We know well, we others, that our mission is to redeem France by blood”. “And just before leaving for the war, at the beginning of August 1914, he said to a priest: “I am going to this war as to a

crusade because I feel that it is a question of defending the two great causes to which I have dedicated my life.

This mentality can be found in the famous Prayer of a Savoyard Officer, by Second Lieutenant Jacques Jacquier, Second Lieutenant in the 97’ Line, who was killed during the assault on a trench on June 16, 1915, at the age of 22;

How much pain there is on the land of France! Is this the beginning of its redemption? I hope so… Happy are those who will see her victorious, penitent and pious.

Should we not be the first to offer ourselves, we whom the love of Jesus crucified has saved and whom his grace fills? (…J We had formed the project of serving France, as Christ served the world, by the influence of our life and by our work. Perhaps it is reserved for us to save her as Christ saved humanity by his blood and his death?

A last testimony will complete this picture of the Catholic France of 1914. Joseph H., a battalion commander in the 114th infantry regiment, died in combat on May 10, 1915. The day before his death, on May 9, 1915, he wrote the following letter to his wife:

50 - Tony Caita, op. cit. to his son Jean, October 25, 1915.

51 - Tony Catta, op. “/. December 8, 1914

52 ‘ On June 19, 1917, the commander of the Plessis consecrated his battalion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. A few weeks later, in compliance with a circular from the Minister of War, the Painlevé circular of July 29, 1917, the military authorities prohibited the consecration of troops to the Sacred Heart and the wearing of the sacred emblem, encircled by the national colors, pinned to the kepi or to the capote. The

53 - Ernest Psichari, Les Foix tjm crient dam U désert, p. 189.

54 - Letter to Abbé BaiUeul, in Henri Massis.i<i vied'Emest Psichari, LArt catholique, Paris. 1920. p. 56.

Father Roger-Thomas Calmel

May 9-2:30 a.m. My dear little Germaine,

We will attack. It may be that God wants me to fall. God knows that it is sacrificing me, because of my deep love for you and my

children. My parents will also cry.

But you see, dear little one, it is good that men know how to die; we live in a very sad time for France because it denies God, I hope that our death will appease the divine anger and that it will return to the beautiful doctrine of Christ.

Don't be too sorry, my poor little Germaine, raise your sons well, be energetic with them. Don't make them into dolls but into men. Don't care about money, you know that money is losing the world. Do good around you for charity and for example.

Goodbye, my poor little one, accept with resignation all the sorrows of life. If God, whom I implore at this moment with all my soul, wants to call me back to him, I will not cease for a single moment to think of you and to pray for you.

AUons, courage, dear little one, I kiss you with all my heart and the dear children.

Goodbye! To you for eternity.

Poor woman, poor children, poor parents!

Such testimonies do not make one want to lead an easy and cosy life. Rather, they call for self-sacrifice and heroism. This spirit so authentically and tenderly human of the generations before the war, this life so Christian that culminated as if naturally in the supreme sacrifice, was the environment in which little Roger Calmel was born and grew up. It is understandable then that the lessons of the war occupied the mind of the child, then of the religious and of the Dominican priest throughout his life. He often came back to them in his writings and in his private conversations.

What is France? What is Christianity? What is the role of nature and grace in the death of the soldier? What is the meaning of the death of an entire elite" and of so many innocents? Can such a sacrifice be in vain? What will be the outcome of this tearing apart"? What is the answer?

55 - Without forgetting the crowd of thinkers and natural leaders who were mowed down by the war, wei

At the Saulchoir, thirty young Dominicans were killed from 1914 to 1918.

56 - The day after the armistice, on November 13, 1918, Major du Plessis predicted the "decomposition of Europe" and expressed his fear "that this peace would open the door to desjo®.

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How much should the Christian be involved in these conflicts, which play too much into the hands of those who have been "homicidal since the beginning" to please God? And to what extent should the Christian participate in these melees led by the "prince of this world"? Father Calmcl will try throughout his life to give an answer to all these questions.

In a fight like ours, he wrote in an article on Ernest Psichari, a fight that is humanly lost in advance, when the troops are betrayed by their leaders, the Christian keeps the duty to fight, to work for the defense and reconstruction, by marrying in the depths of his heart the ardor of the fight and the peace of the victor:

The church on earth will always be militant because it will always be the kingdom of God in a world of sin. The Christian struggle will not cease until we have entered heaven. But in the midst of the struggle, when we experience that everything is lacking and that defeat is immediately assured, it is possible for us not only not to roar with fury and despair, but to taste the joy that God gives and the sweetness of his consolation, if at least we receive with faith the illumination of his word in the simplicity of our hearts.

Where does the soldier draw this strength and peace? Precisely in the certainty of being able to unite his sorrows to the passion of Christ, in the faith in the supernatural efficacy of sacrifice, even in the context of an unjust war:

For the best of them, death on the battlefield had the significance of a voluntary immolation for the iniquities of France and of an intercession with God so that the country would turn away from its masters of error and sin and do penance. Péguy, Psichari, Pierre Dupouey, Augustin Cochin, Pierre Villard and brothers in arms by the hundreds of thousands, who were baptized and carried in their veins fifteen centuries of Christian heredity, had given their lives “so that Christianity may continue. But the official rhetors who perorated on the flagged stage, during the inauguration of the monuments to the dead, did not hesitate to declare that so much nobly, Christianly shed blood should hasten

the triumph of the coldest abstractions and of the devouring Lalcist ideology: democracy, progress, liberty. It is not

57 - Father Ca\n\z\, Sur la tombe de Psichari, Uinérairesn” 124, June 1968. p. 204 et seq.

Father Roger-Thomas Calmel

As if to manifest this indissoluble link between the battles of the fatherland and those of the faith, Providence will guide Father Calmel one last time to the places of the heroic military resistance of 1914-1918. From April 12 to 17, 1975, a few weeks before his death, he was able to go to Lorraine and visit the ossuary of Douaumont one last time. On this occasion, he wrote the following note that was found on his desk after his death:

Good Shepherd Sunday. April 13, 75, visit to Douaumont.

The matter crushed them brutally and indiscriminately, but close to each of them stood the good Shepherd and most of them, I hope, will have blessed his presence and died in peace.

Let us go beyond the hallucinating impression of the gigantic carnage and think in faith how close Christ was to each one of them. (…) God’s punishment, God’s merciful visit, heroic sacrifice for the country, but for many an explicitly Christian sacrifice. (…) The resistance of Verdun should have led to the establishment of institutions of life and order and not of lies and decay.

If it had been, the resistance of Verdun would have provided a certain temporal salvation. It did not. The revolutionary republic stole their heroism from hundreds of thousands of young people; but the Lord God collected it. He made it bear

fruit for their eternal salvation; may it please him to make it bear fruit for a temporal renewal of our country.

It was indeed this re-establishment of the kingdom of God on earth, in souls, families and political societies, which was henceforth to mobilize the energies of Roger Calmel.

58 - Green Cûmel The Priest and the Revolution, Itineraries n’ 127, i

The vocation

After the terrible separations and fears of the war, Gagnol once again experienced the joys of family life. Providence had watched over the Calmel household. Because of his illness, the soldier had been spared the horrors of the front and was able to resume farm work. For there was little time to lament the misfortunes of the times. It seems that it was at this time that the small farm of Gagnol was acquired, which was then in a very bad state. It was necessary to work hard to make up for lost time and to feed the poor growing family.

As soon as he was old enough, little Roger was sent to the elementary school of Sauveterre-la-Lémance. Every morning he valiantly walked the five kilometers. “It warms you up”, say the elders even today. The eldest, soon accompanied by his brother Jean, had lunch at the home of family friends, the parents of his future sister-in-law, because there was no canteen, and in the evening we went back up to the heights of Gagnol.

Roger was ardent, we are told, and stubborn. And the rigors of the post-war period, the stories he heard about the past battles and the present decadence of France made him a thoughtful child. For a great desire for pleasure was taking hold of the French, which was reflected, among other things,

in a vertiginous increase in divorces, the disastrous consequences of which were increasing

the moral and psychological void created by the absence of the dead. Abroad, we were witnessing the collapse of the Catholic empire of Austria-Hungary in favor of the Masonic policy of the United Nations. At home, France was falling back into the same errors that had led to the war. In Gagnol, Matthieu Calmel did not belong to any party, but he worked to survive, he had faith and he prayed. In this school of a hardworking and prayerful Christian life, Roger understood that evil was in souls before it was in hearts. This certainly increased his taste for study, already exceptional for his age. Later, Father Calmel liked to recall the solid foundation he had received in elementary school, and that he had already read, at the age of ten, La douce France èc René Bazin. He had guessed, as if by instinct, that the real revanclit would be of a spiritual and moral order before being political. Very early, "he knew what he wanted. At the age of eleven, he had the instinct to be a priest. When he left school, he wanted to build chapels. Soon he wanted to be a missionary, but his health would not allow it^ "

In 1926, the child from Gagnol received the sacrament of confirmation from the hands of the bishop of Agen, in the church of Saint-Front-sur-Lémance, which lends itself so well to this sacrament. Fortified to resist the various invasions, this 11th century sanctuary preaches by its architecture that life on earth is a struggle " that the Church is militant. The future will show that the child did not receive in vain the function that made him a Christian soldier, nor the grace of the Holy Spirit;

Confirmation, he wrote, gives us an enlightened faith; enlightened to see God and our brothers and ourselves because it puts in our hearts a new fire of love. Because he is a Spirit of love, because he acts as an outpouring of love in the whole Church and in each Christian, the Holy Spirit is a spirit of apostolate. Through him the Church is a fruitful mother. Through him the Church is always at Pentecost and her conquests do not stop^.

Much later, he would return to this event that marked his soul forever:

Holy Spirit, who came into me at baptism and confirmation, give me to live from you. Give me to be your witness.

2 - Testimony of M” Gcorgctic Calmel. wife of Jean, the younger brother of Father Calmel, on June 19

3-Note of May 24, 1953.

4 - From a sermon, Pentecost 1968.

The minor seminary of BonEncontre In June 1926, young Roger left elementary school. What was to become of him? Certainly, his desire to become a priest and a missionary was growing stronger, but his health remained fragile and the income from the Gagnol farm would certainly not be enough to pay for a boarding school. Well advised by the parish priest of Sauveterre-la-Lémance and supported above all by his immense confidence in Providence, Matthieu Calmel agreed to send his son to the minor seminary of the diocese of Agen at BonEncontre. Roger entered the seminary in October 1926 and remained there until the end of his Philosophy degree in July 1933.

The testimony of his fellow students allows us to follow this important stage in the life of the future priest quite closely.

Thanks to the good education he had received at the parish school of Sauveterre-la-Lémance, Roger, from the very first years, showed himself to be a good student, without however distinguishing himself from the rest of his class. However, he already showed a passionate love for literature and poetry. U showed, from his first Latin classes, a rare acuity of judgment. He wrote in 1959: I remember learning with wonder the first paradigms of declensions: rosa, dominus, civis, the rose, the master, the citizen; a whole universe. But why was it that the translation exercises that followed were invariably insipid sentences in which there was only talk of wild boar and the father-in-law’s field?

Paradigms made me dream; exercises bored mef Besides, this taste for letters was linked and served by an inventive, overflowing and communicative imagination. A friend of his, who was his schoolmate for seven years, tells the following story:

I remember that in the seventh grade, he had composed a long epic, recounting - he said - the exploits of one of his ancestors who had been in the service of Napoleon. An epic in patois (we would say today in Occitan) and that he declaimed with ardor, during the Thursday walks.

One found there the son of Matthieu Calmel, his love of the family and the country, and his aptitude to express himself in verse.

However, Roger’s adaptation to the life of a boarder was not without its difficulties. He had been born and raised in the open air and loved to roam freely in the meadows and

forests. He had to show great strength of will and a real spirit of self-sacrifice to comply with the discipline

rigorous discipline of the minor seminary. A letter from his aunt Marie Castayne gives us an idea of her nephew’s difficulties. The latter had confessed to her that his “life was full of a thousand little worries”. The relative was therefore worried about such news. Perhaps she magnified them a little, but she tried to help him as best she could: “Do you have something to be upset about? You must tell everything to your superior or to your confessor. Both of them are there to give you good advice and to help you overcome the inevitable difficulties of life. The devil is cunning, he can bother you to make you fall. He can make you see certain things in an unfavorable light to perhaps disgust you from your holy vocation. (…) Oh yes, it will take me a long time to know that you are no longer suffering. Moral sufferings are the most painful, you must not keep them to yourself. (…) In your visits to the Blessed Sacrament, in your fervent communions, tell the good Jesus to help you become a good little seminarian. Entrust your troubles to Jesus and to those who lead you. Please tell me if you are no longer suffering. Suffering is shared by the friends of the good Jesus. May this thought encourage you.

This letter, impregnated with Christian spirit and tenderness, reveals once again the environment in which Roger Calmel was born and by which he was supported and encouraged throughout his studies.

Intellectual life

During his third year of school, Roger Calmel underwent a transformation that struck those around him. Obviously the child had understood something. At the age of fifteen, the meaning of the Christian life and the circumstances in which he would have to lead it became obvious to him. The richness of the spiritual life demanded of him a more radical commitment, and he felt in an irresistible way the grave duty he would have to fight against the decadence of his country and, after the physical and moral ruins of the war, to rebuild. There was no more time to lose. In October 1929, Roger Calmel entered a new stage of his life that he would never leave.

His brother Jean was a tireless worker in the fields, “of an ardent, generous nature, a worker to excess”. Roger will be the same from now on for the things of the spirit. Ardent and persevering in all that he undertook, he threw himself relentlessly into his studies.

From ninth grade on,” says one of his former students, “he did work that was unimaginable for a kid that age. He never wasted a minute, taking notes and reading non-stop.

When we went in a row and in silence from the study hall to the refectory or to the chapel, he always took a book with him… Thus, in the course of a year, - simply to develop his memory - he had learned by heart two plays by Racine (including Athalie) (…) From then on, and up to philosophy, he was the best student in the class; and at the end of the year, he won all the prizes: and yet the competition was severe among the students.

This passion for study and hard work were certainly excessive. However, they can be explained by the obstinate

and conscious will to serve the Church and his country. Moreover, from a very young age, one finds in the future Father Calmel this desire to assimilate the great human and Christian riches which had made the greatness of France. He wanted to learn by heart the great authors in order to identify himself with these treasures of thought and life. One sees him eager to receive, as much as possible, the intellectual penetration, the clarity of the eloquence, the richness of the imagination, the vivacity of the soul, the strength of will and the sense of honor of the ancients.

Such ardor in work undoubtedly contributed to give Roger Calmel a tense and somewhat rough appearance. It often happened that, during the night, he would wake up his dorm mates with his nightmares during which he would recite the Latin, Greek or German texts he had learned during the day. This was not to everyone’s taste! However, he was able to win the friendship of many of his fellow students, as can be seen in the correspondence he maintained with some of them throughout his life. The little seminarian had a “legendary severity”, but he kept his simplicity, “his great benevolence, his helpfulness and his charity” towards all, which won hearts.

When he had to supervise people younger than himself, he showed an intransigence that showed the son of the country. But no one held it against him. The same witness reports:

The boys that we were, we dreaded these pairs of slaps, masterfully applied, when the warnings were not enough, and which finally did not prevent us from continuing the heckling in the dormitory or in the refectory, no more than they prevented us from loving and admiring Roger Calmel.

Another former comrade adds to this portrait a very accurate note and ends by underlining a weakness that pursued

Calmel until the end of his life:

6 - Testimony of Charles Arrivets, director of the newspaper L'Opinion, from September 1975.

Father Roger-Thomas Calmel

Roger Calmel had the advantage over me of innate wisdom, of a severity and behaviour of language, at the authorized times and places, which were not, however, rudeness; he showed an ardour for work that was always sustained, quite the opposite of my hours or days of fantasy; much more mature than the children of his age, gifted in Greek more than in mathematics, slightly deficient in singing, but wanting to repair by dint of will the absence of a gift of nature, he spent hours of certain recreations to pianote on a dusty harmonium to rectify as much as possible his errors of tone.

In spite of his stubborn will, he could never overcome this handicif Almost all the people who speak of Father Calmel today immediately remember this trait: "He sang out of tune! And one of his former confreres at the Dominican convent in Toulouse in 1951 even added with humor, "11 sang crazy, except when he was dreaming! "

It was not for lack of trying to correct himself! For Gagnol's son was far from being a deficient person and he loved to sing. Much later, during his years of ministry, he asked a Dominican sister who was driving him in her 2CV to teach him the "solemn tone" of the dialogue and the preface he was to use soon. The sister used all her skill and patience, but in vain. After a few unsuccessful attempts, the Father smiled and concluded: "I will continue to sing the ordinary tone", which of course is still wrong*.

Fortunately, the little seminarian Roger Calmel was more successful in the field of studies. Here are some of his academic achievements. In 1932, in his first year of high school, he obtained a “2’ mention” in the test of Innqaise composition, (out of 69 participants), in the inter-school competition organized by the Catholic rinsdcut of Toulouse and the Catholic establishments in its jurisdiction. At the distribution of the prizes at the minor seminary of Bon-£ncontic, on July 16, 1932, he was inscribed nineteen times on the Seminary’s roll of honor, obtaining nine first prizes and being named sixteen times (almost in all subjects, except mathematics).

On July 15, 1933, he passed his baccalaureate in the philosophy section with honors. At the inter-school competition organized by the Institut athohque de Toulouse, he obtained the 1 ” prize (with medal) for dissertation

~ - of the pàv N, on January 9, 2010.

8 - At the time of Father CalcL a former student of the Dominican Sisters of the Holy Name of Jesus, wrote: “Mainicnam, he chanK, and he chance just! “

(out of 48 participants). At the distribution of the prizes, he is registered eighteen times on the honor roll, obtains nine first prizes and is named

One can imagine the pride and joy of Matthieu Calmel who, while his son was working on homework and essays, was exhausting all his strength to keep Gagnol’s farm and to overcome the economic crisis that was hitting French agriculture hard. As for the candidate, he did not seem to have been touched by the demon of vanity. 11 was so amazed by the realm of truth that he discovered day after

day, that human honors did not reach him. He simply did his duty like the people of the country, and he did it with love.

For young Roger, the danger was elsewhere. First of all, he was in danger of losing his already fragile health through overwork, and secondly, of making the search for knowledge the goal of his entire life, of reducing his consecration to God to a consecration to science. Wouldn’t this last one feed a latent egoism? Wouldn’t it close him in on himself? A young priest who knew him well once sent him a warning which, no doubt, was not without foundation. Using the pretext of the need he had for a chemistry formula to make his students do “small analyses of the physics of the land”, he seized the opportunity to warn his young friend against excessive zeal in study:

Thank you, my dear friend, and tell me you are having a restful vacation. I know you too well not to fear that they will be too laborious. Allow my friendship to wish that they be only softly and sweetly? (…)

Have you not understood or even felt that one of the serious dangers of an intensely intellectual life is to make the Christian, the priest who devotes himself to it, forget his reason for being, his essential end, which is to make people love Jesus Christ? How many intellectuals, even lay people, are ardent apostles and all the more precious because they are more knowledgeable. They are wise men, those who seek only the glory of God, rejecting as too unworthy of them any selfish search for that disappointing thing which is human glory.

Please forgive these considerations, which are always in season, to your tender devotion in Our Lord.

Father F. Bormis to Father Roger Calmel.

Obviously, Roger Calmel was well surrounded and did not lack salutary advice to keep the purity of his vocation. However, Iclcvc had already found the solution to these very real difficulties of the life of study, 4 at least from his philosophy class on. And he had discovered them in his ellc-mcmc study.

The former director of the minor seminary of BonEncontre writes about his former pupil and the joy and eagerness with which he had discovered Saint Thomas Aquinas;

For the year of philosophy, I remember the amazement of his philosophy teacher from whom the student had borrowed Jacques Maritain’s book Les degrés du savoir, a work that had just been published, a difficult work, about which the teacher had no doubt spoken in his course. And the student had read the whole book. It was perhaps there that he had begun to discover Saint Thomas Aquinas, through Jacques Maritain (two authors who were designated as his “favorite authors” by the superior of the seminary Pius XI three years later)

Father Calmel would later recount, not without amusement, the enthusiasm with which he devoured Maritain’s work. U learned by heart long passages that he recited, without warning, to his entourage:

It was through The Degrees of Knowledge that I approached the thought of Maritain. It is a metaphysical description of the life of the spirit, with its differentiations, its laws, its primordial rule of objectivity. It is a memorable work of reflective philosophy (…) I was immediately dazzled by the extent of the reflection, the sense of being, the sense of

hierarchies in the order of knowing; I was captivated by the spiritual and poetic resonances. Certain phrases began to sing by themselves in my mind and in my heart.

My refectory neighbors would tease me when I made (approximately) such quotes, or others as splendid, in the middle of a table conversation. - I knew I was far from understanding everything in this Distinguish to Unite, but I knew even more that I was putting myself in the school of St. Thomas and that my mind would thus have a way to breathe and give itself to the Lord ■ ‘.

Providence had given this learned philosopher the grace of choice to give him a teacher who was deliberately Thomistic. This contributed to the

10 - Reported by the former superior of Ban-Encontre.

11 . . Le -testament” of Maritain ../nnnirrrern” 112. April 1967. p. 134-135.

much to give the young student a sure and flexible thought, a right understanding of the great principles of natural reality - that, in particular, of the substantial compound of matter and form - the vision of man as that of a unity between body and blade, and the taste for wisdom which seeks truth on a summit. These first steps of Roger Calmel in the Thomistic thought were determining for the rest of his life.

Moreover, it was the very realism of St. Thomas Aquinas that gave the future Dominican the solution to the problem that the diligent pursuit of truth poses for any conscientious student. If truth consists in a subjective construction of the mind, if science consists in the fabrication of beautiful ideas

and the indulgence of one’s own intellectual curiosity, then, yes, the deep study of philosophy constitutes a real danger. On the contrary, Roger Calmel learned in the school of Aristotle and St. Thomas Aquinas that the reality and essence of things are independent of us. Of course, this was only the confirmation of the common sense of the peasantry which had been with him since his childhood, but which now took on an irresistible light and force. True knowledge begs for light from things. It does not

rather to contemplate the reality outside oneself. Thus, the more one knows, the more one forgets oneself to disappear in the light, the more the glance of the intelligence simplifies. In short, Thomistic philosophy is contemplative from its very beginnings.

The future Brother Marie-Thomas Calmel received in philosophy class the great intellectual directions that would later make him a true thinker.

It is certain, however, that his ardor for work and his enthusiasm could have been a real danger to his physical and mental equilibrium if they had not been regulated and calmed by a proportionate spiritual life.

The spiritual life

At the same time that he was embarking on an intense life of study, Roger Calmel underwent an important spiritual transformation at the age of fifteen. Without ceasing to be cheerful and appreciated by his companions for “his kindness, his liveliness and his quick wit”, the teenager manifested more and more a seriousness and a maturity above his age. With time, he became more secretive, always a little tense, and scrupulously observed the rules, which he saw as the providential means to achieve holiness. By his

work," wrote one of his former students, "his piety, his obedience, he was always

a model, and sometimes a reproach for our childishness. "Obviously, grace worked on this generous heart, but inclined to excess, to enlighten and pacify it. This ardent and obstinate soul was beginning with determination his ascent towards God.

At the age of sixteen, he received the cassock with his classmates from the minor seminary. On this occasion, his parents sent him a letter that expresses their spirit well. The increasingly frank orientation of their son towards the priesthood undoubtedly merited the graces of intelligence and strength:

My dear son,

We share the joy that you feel when you think that soon you will take the cassock. Yes, like you, I am very happy, and so is your mother. Everyone will be happy to see you clothed in the holy habit.' L One can get an idea of the quality of the candidate's spiritual life through some of his readings. In his second year, he received a book by Abbé Thellier de Poncheville, La vie divinisée, dedicated by the author "to the seminarian R. Calmel" on the date of November 1930. This work deals with the mystical life in these terms;

For the great privileged ones of the supernatural order, Tintimity is so perfect that they are already on the threshold of eternal contemplation: will Heaven still have much to reveal to them? Without claiming this exceptional perfection, our lives are invited to the same intimate association with our God, It is his ideal, why is it not ours?

A few months later, the seminarian scribbled his first impressions in the margin of the book, opposite the passage we had just read; “Capital! I only know it at seventeen! “

Then, to the author’s remark: “Without claiming this exceptional perfection… “, he is indignant;

How and why not? But say how: what Augustine, Calmel, could not? It would be hard! With a friend like me, I couldn’t; both of us, my Jesus, we couldn’t!

The apostrophe translates very well the spiritual ardor and audacity which already set the heart of the boy on fire, who intends to carry on to the end this ascent towards the happiness of the union with God which he has glimpsed.

‘ - LettTcdcSUnhicuCalnidàsoii(they,GagrioLlc8ii

Moreover, the news he regularly received from Gagnol could only stimulate his zeal for prayer. His father writes to him:

We are going through a terrible crisis of demoralization due to the lack of Christian education. Not enough faith, not enough courage, especially not enough trust in God who always helps those who love him in all the great trials of life. He alone gives the courage to endure them. In the family everything is fine, we work, I don’t give in, I love. But around us there is so much disorder, I won’t give you any details about the recent suicides in the neighborhood, but let us pray a lot. For the evil is great ‘L

Certainly, this deep work of grace in the soul of the little seminarian created an ever clearer distinction with the common of his classmates, but it occupied too much space in his heart to paralyze him. An anecdote from life at BonEncontre reveals Roger Calmel’s state of mind towards

the end of his schooling. One of his former classmates recounts;

His classmates - and I - would occasionally come up with a good joke - not a bad one - to lighten the very austere atmosphere of the house. He suffered from our levity and sometimes called us to order. In philosophy, the teacher having been unable to give his lesson, we took advantage of it to “heckle” a little. And our friend Roger, annoyed at not being able to work in peace, stood up and shouted: “But God sees us! “This sentence describes the character!

Indeed, knowing that he was in the presence of God, seeing order and regulations as God’s voice, defending God’s rights no matter what one might think of him, this is what defined Gagnol’s son when he was taking the plunge towards the priesthood.

Another testimony has been preserved of Roger Calmel’s interior life at this pivotal time in his life. When he was only in the second grade, he composed a consecration to the Blessed Virgin Mary which shows an astonishing spiritual maturity for a boy of that age. In it he combines childlike tenderness with great doctrinal certainty, a chivalrous spirit with great confidence in God. Here is the text of this consecration:

Mary, most pure Virgin, my good mother, I come today to kneel at your feet and make a contract of love with you. I consecrate to you my heart, my body, my soul; I entrust my vocation to you.

1 son. Gagnol, June 29, 1930.

Father Roger-Thomas Calmel

my interests in time and in eternity: I will tell you about my joys and

You will lead me every morning to the holy table, you will be with me in the hour of trial and I will be for you the most loving child.

To sign these promises and to unite myself to you in an unbroken chain of prayer and love, I want every day. O my mother, be faithful at all costs to the consecration: O Domina mea...

Every Saturday I will impose on myself a small mortification in your honor and on each of your feasts I will renew my sweet contract with you. In return for these promises, O Immaculate Virgin, give me your heart to love Jesus and to fulfill all his wishes as you do. Help me to acquire the virtues he desires of me, to forget myself always, to work only for God and without fear of sacrifice. I will always count on your perpetual help to be what Jesus wants me to be. I am his. I am yours, my good mother. Give me every day your holy and maternal blessing until the last evening when your immaculate Heart will present me in Heaven to the Heart of Jesus to love and bless you without end. To God, my good mother, your little page greets you

Clearly, God's work was becoming more pronounced in this child's soul. From the time he was in the ninth grade, precisely at the age of fifteen, Gagnol's son took a direction, made choices, and gave his intellectual and inner life a direction that would determine his entire life. To the letter, he was verifying the famous adage that says: One's whole life depends on a few "yes" and "no" decisions made at the age of fifteen.

The Catholic Institute of Toulouse

Roger Calmcl's spiritual and intellectual fervor during his last years at the minor seminary of BonEncontre naturally disposed him to follow the call to the priesthood. As the months went by, his initial intuition became obvious: he would be a priest. It was therefore no surprise to anyone when Gagnol's son knocked on the door of the major seminary of the diocese of Agen. It was a surprise, however, when his superiors immediately decided to send him to the Catholic Institute of Toulouse. That year, 1933, saw the birth of the Pius XI seminary, under the auspices of the famous Catholic university. In order to promote the philosophical and theological formation of the clergy, it had been decided to gather the most capable clerics in two houses: the Leo XIII seminary would receive young priests, while the Pius XI seminary would receive candidates for the priesthood selected by their superiors in the dioceses of the apostolic region of the Midi'^

Roger Calmel thus began a new life in October 1933. However, rather than a spectacular turn, this entry into the seminary represented for him the confirmation and intensification of an initial impulse. The life of the future Father Calmel resembles the course of an arrow which, launched one fine spring day from the hill of Gagnol, experienced a new acceleration at each new stage of his life and continued its trajectory, faithful to the direction of the beginning, until the day of his death. Or, if one prefers, he was like a tree that grew in a homogeneous way all the time.

throughout his life because he had been planted in good soil, that of a hardworking and deeply Christian family life.

Moreover, the young seminarian would need a deep sense of sanity and balance to follow his studies in the Toulouse environment. Unlike the good-natured and scholastic spirit of the minor seminary, Calmel would find in the big city a tense atmosphere, agitated by the great problems of the day. The professors showed very different tendencies, which were reflected in the seminarians.

In Canon Louis Capetan (1884-1962), for example, Roger Calmel found a zealous defender of the rights of the Church and of Tradition:

Unquestionably, the ideas which will animate the secular faith take their first impulse in Diderot’s XEncyclopédie, in Voltaire’s Dictionnaire philosophique and his Essai sur les moeurs, in Rousseau’s Contrat social and the Profession de foi du Vicaire savoyard. The new message proclaims universal tolerance, dissociates morality and dogma, conceives and proposes a natural honesty independent from traditional Catholicism and distinct from religion.

On the other hand, the Catholic Institute of Toulouse was directed since 1932 by a young and very prominent rector, Bruno de Solages (1895-1984), a former student of the Parisian seminary of Saint Sulpice, who was to infuse it with a new spirit. A philosopher and theologian close to the personalist current, he exerted a great influence, beyond the limits of the city, on the Christian democrats and social Catholics of the Southwest. In the early 1930s, Father de

Solages wrote an article that caused a sensation. Modernism had totally disappeared, he claimed, but the problems it had posed remained; henceforth, the unfinished business had to be resumed. In other words, the Church’s magisterium, through St. Pius X, had succeeded in silencing the innovators, but it would not give them a satisfactory answer. The article made a strong impression on the young Father Yves Congar, who will be mentioned later. Under the pontificate of Pius XII, rightly suspected of approving the ideas of Father Teilhard de Chardin, Bishop Bruno de Solages was summoned to Rome. But, thanks to the protection of Bishop Montini, the future Paul VI, he was received in audience by the pope to whom he was able to defend himself. Later he was to be found alongside Fathers de Lubac and Congar, and the Protestant Oscar Cullmann, in Cardinal Daniélou’s “Fidelity and Openness” group.

These tendencies, which were becoming more and more evident among the faculty, could not fail to be found among the seminarians. With the ardor of their age, they crystallized the two currents of thought in a radical and polemical way. Roger Calmcl did not appreciate this tension, which was not very conducive to study, and on occasion he complained about it to his father. The latter then encouraged his son to pray, because brotherly understanding “will be another grace that the good God will give you”.

The reason for the dispute was more serious than the jealousies or malice of one or the other. It was a question of a fundamental orientation of Christian life that Father Calmel would later summarize: “At the Catholic university where I was studying philosophy, there was often talk

among the students of Charles Maurras and especially of Emmanuel Mounier”

Just as he had been born in the terrible upheavals of the 1914 war, his ecclesiastical studies were to take off on a battlefield. It is necessary to have an idea of the situation if one wants to measure the true value of Father Roger Calmel’s reaction and the thought that he will develop thereafter.

L’Actionfrançaise

The South of France, perhaps more than any other region, had been shaken by the “affair” of Action Française. Who did not have in mind such a priest friend who had been degraded for having expressed his sympathies to the monarchist journal, or such a notorious Christian, a relative perhaps, who had been refused an ecclesiastical burial for the same reasons? The subject of the condemnation of December 29, 1926, and of the sentences that had followed it, remained in 1933 a living wound in many hearts. What was it all about?

The doctrinal deficiencies of Charles Maurras were a mystery to no one, and none of the Catholics who believed they could collaborate with his journal were under any illusion. Father Calmcl summarized the problem thus:

These are the points that were very well seen by Maurras: the benefits of Roman Catholicism, devotion to the Virgin, the role of the communion of saints. But he stumbled on the mystery of evil. He put faith aside, although he conceived the recovery of France only

16 - Letter from Matthieu Calmel, Gagnol, April 19, 1934.

17 - Father R.-Th. Calmcl. The reverse clericalism". ItmémiresrC 63. May 1962.

18 - Charles Maurras said that he lost his faith at the age of fifteen, when he suddenly became deaf.

Christianity. Without faith, there would be no France. He thinks it, he knows it, he does not say it. It is not a vitally Christian thought," The object of the condemnation of Action française was thus of another order. U had a political dimension and a religious dimension,

Vatican diplomacy

In its relations with France, the Holy See was in a very delicate situation. After the anticlerical measures of the Third Republic and the law of separation of Church and State, the clergy had regained a certain right of citizenship thanks to the heroism it had shown during the Great War. In 1918, the Church was still outside the law, but still acclaimed by the crowds. In order not to lose the advantages that this situation brought to the Church, some ecclesiastics sought at all costs to maintain the best possible diplomatic relations with the governments, whoever they were. This was the position of the Secretary of State, Cardinal Gasparri, and of Pope Pius XI himself in 1925. On the other hand, a good part of the French clergy, trained in the school of the firmness of the holy Pope Pius X, wanted to hold high the flag of Catholic truth and of the rights of the Church.

Thus, in March 1925, the French cardinals and archbishops gathered in an assembly to discuss the problem of secular laws and the "measures to be taken to combat them. They published a text, composed in large part by Father Janvier o.p., which irritated the Pope, the Cardinal Secretary of State

and the Nuncio, Monsignor Cetretti, to the utmost. Cetretti saw this episcopal declaration as “a rebuke to the conduct of the Holy See from Leo XIll to Pius XI”.

Following a meeting with Cardinal Gasparri (May 1925), the French ambassador to the Vatican, Ooulcct, wrote to Briand;

In a general way, he agrees (very) willingly with your views for the pacification of spirits and wishes to contribute to the work of relaxation and conciliation by an appropriate action on the episcopate. He has already, of himself, taken measures to prevent collective demonstrations of the episcopate with regard to the public authorities and the Holy Father exhorts to calm and union the bishops who succeed one another in Rome. To save diplomatic relations with the French government at all costs, the Vatican intended to constitute an open episcopate and clergy

19 - Interviewed in Codgnac on January 31, 1971.

r(1892-2000), CEC,2m.

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to such a policy. But for this to happen, it was necessary to reduce the resistance of those who held to the position of St. Pico X and criticized the secular laws loud and clear.

In a private meeting, the French chargé d’affaires to the Holy See, Charles Arsène Henry, congratulated Cardinal Gasparri on the fact that from now on he would be in charge of choosing the bishops. Henry reported

The reaction of the cardinal was even stronger than I had expected: standing up straight, he said to me three times “You have put your finger on the wound! Then, speaking volubly, he told me that in the future, in fact, the French

bishops would be chosen with more circumspection and would no longer be named, as in recent years, “on information coming from who knows where” (…) “We will see,” said the cardinal, “what the bishops of France will say about the Action française. “

In fact, when the new papal nuncio, Archbishop Maglione, arrived in Paris at the end of 1926, he undertook to renew the episcopate.

Advised by the Assumptionist Father Merklen, director of La Croix, the Dominican Father Bernardet, the Jesuit Father Desbusquois and the Sulpician Verdier, the nuncio suggested to Rome, where he was listened to, the choice of outstanding persons, free from conservative political formations, quite accentuated from the social point of view, and decided to implement the views of Pius XI

This was the generation of Bishops Liénart, Feltin, Suhard.

The condemnation of Action Française was thus the occasion to “purify” the clergy of France to make them more docile to the policy of the Holy See. All the bishops were obliged to add their voices to this measure. Intimidation was used against recalcitrants, and most priests suspected of sympathy for Maurras’ work were removed from important positions.

The return of the modernists

Whatever the intentions of the Roman authorities, this condemnation had important effects in the religious domain. Much later, Father Calmel will summarize this period;

The reason for the condemnation of Action Française was that it was a roundabout way of reaching Saint Pius X and the enemies of modernism.

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Unheard of repression for twelve years. The French episcopate capitulated (Letter of Cardinal Andrieu in 1926: odious, false, approved by Pius XI without discernment). All the resistance to modernism was tied up and the episcopate (ut appointed accordingly - Then came the “Briand agreements” (three candidates proposed by diocese)

The journal L’Action française had indeed been a rallying point for many deeply Catholic personalities who found there the means to meet, to support and to help each other in the fight against the errors of the time. Among the sympathizers of the Action française were eminent ecclesiastics and theologians, such as Cardinal Billot, Dora Besse, the Dominican fathers Pegues, Vallée, Garrigoii-Lagrange, Clérissac, who were vigorous defenders of Thomism and anti-Modetnism. They were joined by great intellectuals such as Henri Massis, Louis Bertrand, Henri Bordeaux, Henri Ghéon, Jacques Maritain. This generation wanted to be “all at once Catholic, Thomist and Maurassian”, quite simply. They saw the Action française as the way to reconcile “the idea of nation with the Catholic idea on the common ground of ranti-modcrnism”.

This religious and intellectual elite considerably embarrassed the modernists and reminded them too much of the humiliation that the condemnation of St. Pius X had represented for them. This is why the main agents of the campaign against Charles Maurras’ newspaper were the main heads of the innovative movement.

As early as 1909, Maurice Blondel had written an article in the Semaine sociale in Sortleiiux, “Catholicisme social et monophorisme. Controversies on methods and doctrines,” in which he denounced “the incompatibility between

Mautrassian ideology and Christianity. He returned to the charge with three writings, from October 1926 to the summer of 1927. The most famous was a special issue of the Cahiers de la Nouvelle Journée of October 1926 entitled: “Un grand débat catholique et français. His intention was clear: “As it is,” he wrote, “it will undoubtedly be enough to irritate Father Garrigou-Lagrange, Maritain and a few others, even those who, without being or no longer being

22 - Interviewed in Congnac, June 31, 1971.

23-Ph. O\eru\a,EnmMamrasaMmlain,umgéiiérati(mmtdleauellecalholique(1920l9M Cerf, Paris, 1999,p.225. il Prévost ^.err.,p.314.

24 - In Philippe Prévost op. rit, p 227.

of A.F., go to theocracy and claim if not from Pius X like Maurras, at least from Boniface VIII, interpreted moreover in their own way,’^ “

Blondel was surprised to learn that his writings were very well received in Rome. Pope Pius XI explicitly mentioned the Cahier de la Nouvelle Journée and, a few days later, had a personal letter sent to each of the contributors to the Cahier by the end of October by the Nunciature. Blondel had the joy of receiving this letter from the nuncio: “The Holy Father, having taken note of the article entitled ‘The Conclusions of a Personal Experience’ which you published in the Cahiers de la Nouvelle Journée (No. 10), has instructed me to express to you His august thanks for this exposition, the reading of which has caused Him great satisfaction,” During a private audience granted to Eugene Duthoit, Pius XI told

him of his satisfaction and his desire “that the ideas presented be the object of a ‘high vulgarization’*.

The pope went so far as to prescribe to the bishops who came to Rome the reading of this famous Notebook. Blondel joked about it; “It seems that I am personagrata in the Vatican”, “here we are “canonical literature”! “

This joy was shared by many of his friends and gave them wings. For Maurice Blondel and his friends, it was indeed a doctrinal battle. Thomism and anti-modernism had to be attacked. A year after the condemnation, Blondel noted that the Thomists “feel that the affairs of the A.F. and the attitude of some of their own like Billot, Pègues, Noël, Garrigou, etc., are a blow to their claim to be the exclusive and impeccable representatives of pure orthodoxy”.

The condemnation of Action française was thus the signal for a counterattack by the modernists and liberals. For if the most prominent personalities were put aside, such as Father Pègues, Cardinal Billot, Abbé Le Floch, Father Janvier, there were more discreet dismissals or “transfers” in all the seminaries of France. Most of the defenders of Thomism who formed the seminarians and scholastics were discreetly

25 - In Jacques Prevotat, Les calholùjiKS a Uaion Jrançaise, Histoire d’une condamnation, 1899 26 - Letter to Maurice Blondel from his son-in-law Charles Flory, to whom Duthoit had made a report of the audience. In Jacques Prévotat, op. cit. p. 424.

27 - Letter from Maurice Blondel, February 15, 1928. Fouilloux, Une Église en quête de liberté. La pensée catholique Jrançaise entre modernisme et Ktttican II, 1914-1962. Descléc de Brouwer, 1998. p. 75; In Philippe Prévost, op. cit. p. 319.

or openly set aside. The door was open to innovators. Maurice Blondel explicitly rejoiced in this:

Your time is coming, the clearing up of the A.F. which is confusing so many minds is opening up a freer and safer field, more fruitful too, since the young people who were in false doctrines and in a state of mind which can be said to be bad and sterile, will have to look for explanations and directions such as those you can provide for them.

It is clear that the new generation was going to let itself be seduced by the current of novelty and freedom that was presented to it. In 1932, Jacques Maritain could affirm that the French seminarians threw themselves "on the confused ideas of the philosopher of Aix (Blondel)".

Father Calmel would write at the end of his life:

Between the two modernisms, there was the savage condemnation of the French Action; in this lamentable affair a very authoritarian pope did not manage to understand that his repressive operations, being carried out as he did, would have no other outcome than disastrous: first the crushing of the Catholics attached to the Syllabus, then the advent of an episcopate not opposed to the modern errors: as for the famous Catholic Action it would find there no other advantage than to politicize itself and to bend in the direction of socialism".

The Pico XI seminary of the Catholic Institute of Toulouse was no exception. All the more so since its rector, Father de Solages, openly manifested his attachment to the new ideas. As early as 1930, while he was still in Paris, he wrote an article in La Vie intellectuelle, at Father Bernatdot's request,

in which he defended the latter’s work Pourquoi Rome a parlé directed against Action française*.

28 - Letter from Maurice Blondel to Arcluinbault on October 5, 1927. in E. Fouilloux, op. àt., p. 74-75, cites 1” Prévost,”;.ri/“p.319.

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Emmanuel Maunier (1905-1950)

According to Father Calmel’s testimony, it was not Maurice Blondel who held the attention of his confreres at the seminary, but rather the young Emmanuel Mounier who was then beginning his brief career as a writer.

The young professor of philosophy (at the Lycée du Parc, in Lyon) and his review Esprit (since 1932) believed to find in personalism the solution to “the crisis of man in the xx’ century”. At the time when Roger Calmel was studying, Mounier had already published works that manifested a great intellectual maturity. A summary of his thought can be found in Qji est-ce que le personnalisme, 1947. His alert and often incisive style was made to please these young people, dissatisfied with their time and thirsting for novelty. And he boldly opened a way that would find its full success in the Vatican Council II

His method, first of all, is significant: it is in modern thought that he wants to draw his principles. He receives from Descartes his cogito that he sees as “an act of a subject as much as an intuition of an intelligence, the affirmation of a being that (…) poses itself with authority in existence” (p. 14-15). Moreover, he thinks, Hegel’s exaggerations should not make us forget “what personalism owes to Leibniz and Kant, and the dialectic of the person to the whole effort of the idealist thought”. More precisely, it is Maine de Biran

who is “the precursor of the French personalism”, insofar as he “seeks the self in the motor efifort by which we weigh on the world”. Mounier salutes in passing Kierkegaard who “affirms the irreducible spouting of freedom”, and he thanks Marx “who reproached Hegel for making of the abstract spirit, and not of the concrete man, the subject of History, for reducing to the Idea the living reality of men, (…. and which provokes all the contemporary thought to free itself from the idealist mystifications, to take foot on the common condition of the men, and to link the highest philosophy to the problems of the modern city” (p. 18).

In the end, “the person is not an object to be separated and looked at, but a center of reorientation of the objective universe” (p. 19), it is source of explanation, it is creative.

Nevertheless, Mounier does not want to fall into the error of the raw existentialism which tends to isolate man and to see others as a danger

32 - La pensée de Charles I^éguy, 1931: La révolution personruiliste et communautaire, 1934; De

(“L’cnfcr, c’est l’autre” said Sartre). This is why he sees communion and life with others as a primitive fact of the person and of pa sonalism. The person is above all relation to others, “communion” which “liberates” it, which is the occasion of “a mutual fertilization” (p. 39), Human life is then reduced to a “dialectic” between “refirmation of personal absolutes” and “the cdilîcation of a universal unity of the world

Because of his starting point which he had taken in the contemporary thought, Mounier comes to consider the

person as a relation, the existence as an action (p. 90) in continuous movement towards the being (p. 75-76).

This principle leads the personalist philosopher to define the “eminence” of the person (p. 79). This is why “to accept suffering and death in order not to betray the human condition (…) is the supreme act of the person” (p. 76). The martyr and the saint are, therefore, only witnesses of humanity.

To Christianize modern philosophy, it will be enough to say that God stands beyond this tendency; “Christian personalism goes to the end: all the values group themselves for him under the singular call of a supreme Person. “God is “the value of values”, he is the result of the subjectivism personalistic.

Emmanuel Mounier apparently succeeded in the tour de force of reconciling contemporary thought with a certain Christianity. With him, all the domains of knowledge and of life are reviewed in the light of these discoveries : literature, art, history, politics. On this last point, it is easy to note the almost literal agreement between the philosopher’s words and the writings of the highest ecclesiastical authorities at the time of the Second Vatican Council: “The world is becoming more and more intcrnational. There is no longer an independent nation in the old sense of the word. (…) World unity will have to be achieved sooner or later” but on condition, among other things, “that the nations renounce total sovereignty, not in favor of a superimpetialism, but of a democratic community of peoples. And since from now on, “Christianity is no longer alone”, we must take our side and work for a “new Christianity”, that is to say, for “the community of Christians in Christ, mixed with other men for the profane work” (p. 120-122)

33 - Compare with John XXIII,/irai”,/mil, l%3.n Vatican II. constitution Gaudium H sjio.

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This is the source from which a good number of the seminarians of the Catholic Institute of Toulouse drank, with the encouragement of their teachers. They

Later, at the Second Vatican Council, the Church had to learn from modern thought, to draw from it the “cult of man” and the “dignity of the human person” which naturally led to religious freedom and the loyal participation of the Church in the establishment of a world government.

One sees it clearly, Maurras and Mounier represented much more than two antagonistic thinkers. Two worlds, two conceptions of life, of the man and of the tradition confronted each other in the jousts of the young Toulouse clerks and even, in certain cases, inside the consciences.

The common sense answer

Which side should Roger Calmel take? Was he going to throw himself into the fray to discuss, judge and decide? It is appropriate to understand the reaction of the young seminarian, so much it reveals his spirit and the intellectual life that he will maintain

First of all, true to his peasant origins, Father Calmel did not mince words. He knew the real situation of the country too well to engage in ideological debates. The incompetence and instability of the left-wing governments, the scandals that followed one another, and especially the laws against the Church did not give him any desire to negotiate with the socialists. A few months before his entry into the seminary of Pius XI, the letter in which he mentioned to his father the

sad state of France received this common sense answer: My dear son.

Yes, things are bad in France and elsewhere. But also, why has France been divided into two camps: the France of the overworked and the France of the privileged? I only have to go back to 1914 when injustices in benefits were being created. And so on until today. Everywhere it is the discontent that rumbles. Also the people are bitter. And I don’t trust any party, because all those who have governed since the war have only favored some to the detriment of others

Well informed about the state of the country and the world, the seminarian passed on to his father the news that might interest him. At the beginning of 1934, he

1932 to February 1934. ^ ‘ ‘

35 - Letter from Matthieu Calmel to his son. Gagnol. February 8, 1933.

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told him about the Communist propaganda and the disorder the Russians were ordering in China to win over this immense empire to the revolution. Now, Matthieu Calmel had this revolution in front of him:

In Sauveterre, I know that there are some who praise the regime of Russia, and Sunday, a gentleman told me: yes. there, it is the good life, the rich are not so good. He said that the state should take care of everything, and I didn’t talk to him much. I understood that we were completely opposed.

(…))eanne is in history, at the beginning of the Revolution, Who knows if at this moment also, it does not prepare something similar. Let us hope that gentleness will soon give way to violence, and that a great charity will reign among men. In truth, the social unrest that was raging everywhere in France, and especially in the capital, was due in large part to the regime itself. The country's problems were not a matter of individuals, as the arbitrary division between "right" and "left" would have us believe, but of the Third Republic itself and its laws. The problem is fundamentally political:

We pray. We would like a beautiful and united France. And it could easily be with some energetic reforms in the laws that would put more trust between citizens or avoid a lot of unemployment. Because I know some who do not employ (hire) anybody only because they have too many costly responsibilities, accidents and social insurances. As for this damned money which raises so much disorder in Paris"! If there hadn't been so many bankers in the past to run around the countryside, to exploit the weakness, the selfishness, the ignorance of a great number, less mistrust, more charity would animate the world today".

From the depths of his campaign, Mr. Calmel kept himself informed about the political situation. When the Stavisky affair broke out (December 1933 - January 9, 1934), he received a pamphlet that exposed the cormption and negligence of the successive governments that ran France:

I sometimes read a few pages of this brochure in the evening. And I notice indeed that we had a not very brilliant team of governors

36 - Letter of M Jtihieu Calmel i "n beds. Gagnai, February 8, 1934.

37 - Allusion aiii riots of February 6, 19341 Paris.

38 - Letter from Matthieu Calmel to his son. Gagnol, February 11, 1934.

dats, one would be careful not to vote for the Freemasons^'.

The backstage politics did not interest the seminarian at that time, but the successive upheavals gave him beautiful “lessons of things” on the subversion that he will have to fight in the future. All the more so since, in the eyes of his father, it is above all the men who are lacking in France. Rather than moaning about the misfortune of the times, the time had come to form an elite and deeply Catholic families. For the social fabric of old Christendom is becoming more and more paganized.

Since you have been in Toulouse,” his father wrote to him, “we have had three new deaths in Sauveterre, (...) No births have compensated for these gaps. In July 1938, Father Calmel had the great joy of participating in the first solemn mass of one of his confreres, recently ordained, The beauty of the day was, however, tarnished, in the eyes of the seminarian, by the dress of those present. His father's response clearly showed the weakness of the Catholic faithful, who were far too quick to follow the fashion of the world:

Yes, you point out some details that do not denote the same delicacy of the middle of X. For example, I myself remember gently reprimanding your brother when for the first time I saw him wearing such short shirts with very short sleeves, which is common today. But here however the sleeves are worn long to the elbows. There is certainly no impure thought in these outfits for those who are pure. But it is unfortunate that they follow a trend of sloppiness in contact

with bad company, who would also wear clothes that are too flimsy and could well shock and make one blush. Those who dress in this way (act) without thinking enough that their Christian soul should make them choose what is most elevating, both in clothing and in reading.

Father Roger-Thomas Cdmel

In France, if there are no disorders as serious as in China, it is thanks to the Catholic elite, that a good number of them still stand up for righteousness, justice, virtue and I don't frequent any café.

Let each one do what he can and must do for the formation of such an elite, let each one go to the end of the power that Providence has given him in the city for some, in the village, the profession or simply in the family for others. It is again the good peasant sense which transpires in the following letter:

You tell me that they give you lectures on Christian marriage, on the Christian family. Alas, since my young childhood until our days I have seen faults to destroy and ruin the family. And yet if France is to live strong and beautiful, it is necessary to have families that are the same. And they will only become strong and beautiful as long as the Christian religion penetrates them and increases in them those noble sentiments that your very pure hearts of priests know how to communicate to generous and docile souls.

It was to this policy that Roger had been trained, that of the field, and to which he was faithful. Real life had instilled in him realistic principles that protected him in advance from all utopias. Since his childhood, he had been a Thomist before he even knew it.

The seminarian

In addition, Roger Calmel was quite other than a columnist of a political review or a pretender to power, he knew himself and wanted to be a seminarian, dedicated to God and to the study of the truth. Because, to understand the danger of the personalism of Mounier it was necessary a solid metaphysical armature; to judge objectively Maurras and his work, as had feii Saint Pius X, it was necessary to have acquired an intellectual maturity above the average. How could one pretend to resolve this delicate question when one did not yet know how to ask a question? Providence did not ask him to set himself up as a judge, but to choose a master. That is why, in the somewhat electric atmosphere of Toulouse, the young seminarian did not allow himself to be diverted from his duty, he had the grace to rise up with an aib

42 - Letter from Matthieu Calmel to his son. Cagiiol. February 8, 1934.

43 ‘ Letter from Matthieu Olmclànn BU,Gagnol, February 25, 1934.

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above the quarrels of the day. After mentioning the two authors who were poisoning the minds and recreations of his fellow students, he adds with candor: I read neither of them. I was absorbed, enthused by the Summa Theologica and the works of Maritain

Much later, he will tell :

At the time when I was immersing myself in Les Degrés du Savoir (and in La Philosophie bergsonienne, republished around the same time), some of my fellow students said to me: “What do you think you’re getting out of these old scholastic stories? It is not by this that Maritain is

interesting; it is by [‘integral humanism’].” I was more than skeptical of their assessment and Integral Humanism left me uncomfortable. Certainly I was enthusiastic about some of the most important themes: rebuilding a Christianity, recognizing the temporal as an intermediate end, sanctifying oneself in the profene. However, (...) was he really sure that this famous new Christianity should have the appearance he described?

There was a lot of talk about divided citizens of faith and their peaceful cohabitation

The young seminarian’s reaction to such quarrels is very significant not only of his temperament, but of the grace that inhabited him. As his brother worked hard and sometimes even excessively in the fields of Gagnol”, Father Roger gave himself up with all his strength to the work of the mind. Although study sometimes seemed to him a bit monotonous, he did it with calmness and perseverance. It was truth that captivated him, not error. He had enough judgment and Christian sense to perceive the danger of novelties, even those distilled by a master as prestigious as Jacques Maritain, but he did not stop at them. It was neither the time nor the place to do so**. It was time to discover wisdom.

This assiduous work was to lead Father Calmel to a light that was to serve as a beacon throughout his life. It was precisely between the ages of 19 and 22 that he

44 ‘ Pire R.-Th. Calmcl, ” Le cléricalisme inverse “. Itinéraires n’ 63, May i96Z.

45 - ” The “testament” of Maritain “. Itinéraires n” 112, April 1967. p. 127.

(letter from Mr. Calmcl. on December 9, 1933). ^ ^

47 - Letter from Matthieu Calmel to his son, February 8, 1934.

48 - “I am sincerely happy with your calmness at work. It is what is needed. I rexpericncc: calm, son, February 14, 1934)

49 - It was only at the age of sixty that Father Calmcl gave a definitive judgment on the work and thought of Jacques Maritain. See Itinéraires n” 181, March 1974. p. 190-193.

the age when the intellectual personality completes its formation, when the spirit acquires tastes and makes choices that remain forever. As he says himself, it was St. Thomas Aquinas who conquered his intelligence, St. Thomas in the text and through the explanations given by Mari tain*. It is the thoraisn* that would give the answer to the problems of the time and of all the times, It is this wisdom that it was necessary to return if one wanted to make some good to the homma.

How does Roger Calmel approach Saint Thomas Aquinas? He sees the thought of the common doctor neither as a system, nor as a moment in history, but as a school of thought and of life. He listens to him with the docility of a son in order to see things as they are. Among the readings of the seminarian, we will retain two texts that Father Calmtl will quote in 1958 in a work where he analyzes the principles of Christian teaching. To form minds rightly and Christianly, and to give them the intellectual vigor they need to face the modern world, it is necessary to lead them to Saint Thomas. But precisely, this approach must avoid two pitfalls, from which Jacques Maritain knew how to protect his readers.

Against those who access St. Thomas Aquinas as one opens an encyclopedia, who claim to know him down to the

smallest ad tertium, or who ask him for a ready-made solution to the questions of the time, Maritain answers with accuracy:

Incomparably coherent, linked in all its parts, Thomism is however not what one calls a “system”. (…) The word system evokes the idea of a mechanical connection or at least of an assembly as spatial of parts, and consequently of a choice of elements, if not arbitrary at least personal, like any art construction. (…)

On the contrary, it is essential to Thomism to require that all that is of construction and machinery be rigorously subordinated to that which is of the immanent activity and vital movement of intellection. it is not a system, an arlefactum, it is a spiritual organism. (…) It is that in truth Thomism is a “common” work.

One is not a Thomist because in the store of systems one chooses him as one system among others, as you choose a pair of shoes in a shoe store (…). In that case, it would be more stimulating to make a system of one’s own. One is a Thomist because one has given up trying to find in a

30-After having taught at the tiHÛnilcaitiolique de Paris from 1914 to 1933, Jacejucs Maritain i vaic then an Pomirieal Instituée ofMediaeval Studics of Toronto, in Clanada (1933-1941).

system manufactured by an individual the philosophical truth, this individual being called ego, and because one wants to seek the true - oneself certainly and by one’s own reason - by being taught by all the human thought, in order not to neglect anything of what is^^

On the other hand, if the temptation of the scholars is to expect from Saint Thomas a ready-made system which exempts them from docility and conversion, others consider him only as a link in a chain, as the witness of an era, as an important but transitory stage of human thought. Jacques Maritain severely criticizes this way of seeing: 11 there is a way of studying Saint Thomas which consists in reading first Kant, Bergson and Blondel", then Aristotle, then the Fathers, then Avicenna and Averroes, then if necessary Pierre Lombard or Alexandre de Halès, then finally the writings of Saint Thomas in chronological order (fragments of all this, of course, because life is short), in order to enlighten Saint Thomas in the light of modern philosophy, and to discern all that he received from his predecessors, all that he added, during his individual evolutionary process. This method, taken as a rule of intellectual discipline, is vain and sterile. Because it amounts to treating Saint Thomas as an object to be judged, - and to acting as if one already had the science, whereas it is a question of acquiring the science.

Provided that they are done with the necessary light, and that one does not expect too much from them, such researches and comparisons will be good, and necessary, - in particular the thorough study of the modern philosophers, - but to whom will have already reached the adult age of knowledge. For the iitcipientes, they are causes of swelling, not of science. The other method consists in really placing oneself with regard to St. Thomas in the situation of the living person who receives, in front of the living person who gives, of the one who is formed and illuminated, in front of the one who forms and illuminates; so that St. Thomas teaches us to think and to see, in order to progress under his guidance in the conquest of the intelligible being. This method is good and fruitful, it puts the soul in the truth of its state, to lead it to the truth of things",

St. Thomas, the docility of the disciple and of lcnf^t?

54 - J. Le ^oefeur angélique, Hartmann, Paris, 1929, p. 229-233,/>/ Écoie chrétienne, {voir

Appendix 3, page 603): On the right way to study Saint Thomas, p. 198-199.

Father Roger-Thomas Cabnel

Warned against these two shortcomings of beginners, and helped by the intellectual penetration he had already shown in the minor seminary, Father Calmel penetrated little by little into the spirit of Saint Thomas. What did he retain from his first years of philosophy?

Two aspects of Thomism seem to have particularly marked the seminarian. The notion, first of all, of Christian philosophy. If Saint Thomas Aquinas was an eminent philosopher, and he showed this sufficiently in his commentaries on Aristotle, he saw his philosophy as a servant of theology. He practiced it widely and defended it boldly, but he saw it in an atmosphere of faith, integrated into a synthesis of thought and life. Authentic Thomism carefully distinguishes the objects and methods of the sciences, but unifies them in a vision of wisdom. Its philosophical developments are authentically philosophical, drawing their conclusions from natural reality, but it humbly recognizes what philosophy, the work of natural reason, owes to the supernatural certainties of Revelation, and it proceeds with all the more caution because it knows from faith the disastrous consequences that the smallest error in principle or method can have. One finds indeed in all the works of Father Calmel this care, sometimes a little tense, to do the work of a philosopher explicitly and actually Christian. In the few philosophy classes he gave here and

there, he systematically tried to go back to the great revealed truths, to show how the principles of the natural order find their place in the Christian synthesis. In the same way, if his writings never teach philosophy ex professa, they are studded with philosophical considerations, they are animated by a Thomistic thought.

On the other hand, the principle that seems to have seduced the student of philosophy the most was the “hylemorphic compound”. Helped in this by his peasant origins and by his artistic sense, Father Calmel understood deeply the unity, in every corporeal reality, of matter and form. The things are not the agglomeration of particles united accidentally, they form a whole. They do not result from the fortuitous juxtaposition of two elements, they are the union of an indeterminate principle, the primary matter, and of a determining principle, the substantial form. They have an inimitable unity, a nature and an activity of their own, and a finality. With Aristotle and Saint Thomas, the young seminarian saw material realities in their intrinsic unity, in their harmony, in their life, in their beauty. In contrast

55 - Saint Thomas Aquinas

The Catholic Institute of Toulouse

of Plato who imagined the substantial form of bodies or the blade of the living as an Idea separated and more or less imprisoned by matter, the young Thomist learned to grasp the principles of natural reality as inseparable. He became passionate about substantial being and the balance of things. This will be seen in particular in his conception of psychology, teaching, art, liturgy and authority.

There was something else, however. If the jousting in the seminary and the disturbing sympathies of many of his confreres and even of his teachers for the new ideas stimulated Father Calmcl to work, they opened his eyes to the duty of prayer and of priestly sanctity. If the student of BonEncontre had already been astonished by the childish lightness of his classmates, the seminarian of Toulouse had to suffer a lot from the carelessness of those who were destined for the priesthood. Looking back over the years, Father Calmel was able to share with the public the disappointment he had felt during his studies in Toulouse. His impressions are useful for understanding the slope that the French clergy was taking at the time and its growing benevolence for the errors of modernism:

At the origin of the impurity of the view of the world, at the origin of filial impiety, it is perhaps appropriate to point out the dullness of the priestly spirit. It seems to me that it is to this point that we must go down if we seek to perceive the ultimate reasons why so many regular and secular priests have more or less easily given in to the betrayal of the Mass,

of doctrine and of Scripture. What was the spirit that reigned in the seminaries of France around 1930-1935, during the turning point of the condemnation of Action Française and the launching of Catholic Action, what was the spirit that reigned in the seminaries of France that I have known? Was it not taken for granted that perfection, I mean supernatural perfection, perfect charity, is good perhaps for religious; but if one is not a priest in an Order it is understood that there is no need to strive for sanctity; As it is understood that the Mass must be performed in a manner that is undoubtedly rubrically correct, but that it is not the act of the highest contemplation according to the great word of Saint Vincent Ferrier* and that it does not command the sanctification of the priest, the prevailing spirit was that of spiritual mediocrity, of the deliberate refusal of perfection, of connivance with modern errors in view of a success

56 - “Missa est oititts opus contempUtionis quodposât esse” (Saint Vincent Fctticr, Sente Sab. Post

apostolic infallibility. The decisive choice, a choice not disapproved of by the bishops, was indivisibly that of clerical correctness and ecclesiastical arrivism by taking the unheard-of path of what would soon be called opening up to the world. This is the sign under which generations of future priests were formed, at least in France, in the years 30-35. Before that time I had no direct way of judging this. (...) The minds of these outwardly correct young priests were already closed to the mystery of the Mass and its sacred rites; their view of the world was already that of ferocious, deluded and complicit arrivistes; their hearts were of immense impiety with regard to Saint Pius X, the Council of Trent and so many men and women saints, virgins and doctors who, to hear them tell it, had been preventing for the last four centuries

(at least) the holy Church from advancing and taking the historical turns

Witnessing this decadence which was gradually winning over a good number of his confreres, Father Calmel understood that he had to take a step back. Far from assuming the duty to judge and condemn, he devoted himself to prayer and study. Through silence and docility, he walked towards the heights of wisdom and science. He who would later become a champion of the faith, a fearless defender of the truth and of the sanctity of the Church, knew how to keep silent when necessary and to put himself in the school of great masters. He was able to challenge error because he had loved the truth and had made the necessary sacrifices” to discover it in depth. Above all, he had knocked at the right door, that of St. Thomas Aquinas, which would soon lead him to his father St. Dominic,

57-“Recla^ionauSiinrKrc”,;/iiiAi<iranM90,fivricrl975.p. 10,

The health reports he sends to his family are not good. In a letter written on August 5, 1938, his father regrets his illness and preaches k rest.

4

The Dominican Novice

A pplied to his studies with the ardor that characterized him, the young Abbot Roger Calmel entered little by little into the joy of the truth. Moreover, his heart and soul were so filled with the wonders of Tradition and St. Thomas Aquinas that he was hardly inclined to look elsewhere. His vocation to the priesthood was quietly taking shape as the months went by, according to what seemed to him to be the plans of Providence: he would be a priest, quite simply, a priest with a great zeal for doctrine, entirely devoted to the holy

sacrifice of the Mass and to the good of his parishioners, a diocesan priest attached to a land and a parish.

However, at the end of his third year, the seminarian was seized by a lively and insistent grace. There was no doubt that he had to leave the Pius XI seminary and ask to be admitted to the Order of St. Dominic. This was what he would call his “sudden entry into the Order at the end of the summer of ‘36”. “I had always wanted to be a priest,” he would later testify, “but I was not looking at St. Dominic at all” when, “suddenly, at the age of 22,” came to him this vocation as a Friar Preacher™.

Son of Saint Dominic

What were the motives for such a sudden change of heart? It should be noted first of all that this choice, for a clergyman, to enter the Dominican Order was not at all unusual. The case had arisen very frequently in the early days of the Order.

of the Order. And more recently, the great restorers of the Dominicans in France had been secular priests; Father Jandel, Father Lacordaire, Father Cormier, and so many others.

Moreover, as sudden as it was, this choice of Father Calmel was not a break. It was in his preparation for the priesthood that he found his Dominican vocation. Dazzled by priestly sanctity, by the duty of union with God inherent in the life of the priest, he felt the need for more renunciation. To be a holy priest, he said to himself, I must leave the world and myself more, I must be more like Jesus the priest and therefore also like Jesus the victim, I must dedicate myself more fully and more simply to the contemplation of the

truth. Thus he was invited by grace to knock on the door of an essentially priestly religious order*.

In addition, the young seminarian received the special grace of grasping the great richness of the great religious orders. During his three years of study at the Pius XI seminary, he had been in frequent contact with the Dominicans of Toulouse. He had heard their lectures and their preaching, he had frequented the Thomist Reme, he had been able to participate in the festivities of the anniversary of the canonization of Saint Dominic (1234-1934) which were celebrated in Languedoc with particular solemnity. By studying St. Thomas Aquinas, by frequenting the great preaching friars of his time, he had been able to form a high idea of their Order. And as was his habit, he was not content with superficial knowledge or admiration. It happens so often that postulants to a religious order observe it like those birds that visit a large tree, jump from one branch to another, pick a few berries, and then fly away to other places because they have not understood the riches they are leaving behind. Father Calmel, on the contrary, not only grasped the generous sap that flowed in the tree of Saint Dominic, but he also knew how to guess the

He was very aware of the supernatural vigor and fulfillment that his priesthood would gain if he were received into such an Order. A year before his death, he expressed his state of mind very well when he pitied the clerics who

have no idea what it is like for a priest to be given over to the great breath of an Order by the fact that he has entered it thoroughly. (...) We will never know enough, we will only know in Heaven what favor God has bestowed on us

of Father Caimcl m La Mjstèmh Rofeome de U Grace. (tyZZ-WS). DMM. 1990 edition,

calling us to follow a holy founder. There is a charism of the great orders and streams of graces that accompany this charism".

Now the charism that seduced Father Roger Calmel was that of Saint Dominic. In this soul of light, he found the father he was looking for for his soul and for his priesthood. On April 21, 1935, Father Vayssière, who was soon to receive the son of Gagnol as a priest, had written a circular letter addressed to the Dominican fathers and brothers of the province of Toulouse, which had a great impact. In it, he developed the main lines of the devotion of the sons of St. Dominic to their father, the life they should draw from the heart of their holy founder. For, wrote the provincial :

Just as God gave to his Christ a full, capital grace which, from his heart, spreads over the whole mystical body, so he gave to Saint Dominic, as to the various patriarchs of the religious life, that fullness of grace which their descendants must live.

(…) The glory of the founders of the Order (…) is that they themselves live again in the souls of their children.

Father Vayssière took the example of Father Cormier, from whom he had received the habit of the Order, and who was later beatified. It was from him that Father Vayssière had drawn such a filial devotion to Saint Dominic;

In the heart of this venerated father, St. Dominic lived with a truly admirable intensity of thought and love: to look at him, to study him, to imitate him, to relive him, was his unceasing need, "O Dominic," he often said, "come and live in us. (…) He used to say: "Establish everything in Saint Dominic": Instaurare omnia in Dominico, that is to say, frame

everything with his memory, animate everything with his spirit, vivify everything with his grace, consume everything in his charity. This is a magnificent ideal that can only seduce our souls, dedicated to the same vocation.

Such was the Father who seduced the heart of Abbé Calmel. In St. Dominic he found a source that would pour into his priestly soul a superabundant life. In him he could realize the great ideal that had appeared in the course of his studies and prayers, that of a profound union with God who overflows in mercy for souls.

Saint Dominic," Father Vayssière continues, "dwells on the highest peaks, the peaks of God; there his inner tent is set up and he is the only one who can be found in the world.

62 - Letter of April 14, 1974.

63 - Father Marie-Etienne Vayssière. "La dévotion à saint Dominique", separate issue of L,i VU t

apostolic. In his life. God is not a simple memory, a quick stop, a passing incident, it is a habitual stay, a permanent contact, an unceasing communion with all that he is, an endless flow of his whole being in him; his life is an ever eager gaze, a never-satisfied desire, an impulse that always lifts him up. (…) This is not all. Just as God's life is not entirely in the mystery of his intimate communications, but still pours out in the irresistible impulse of an infinite goodness, so Dominic's life is not exhausted in the divine fullness that is his sharing: it spills out its superabundance, and from there his apostolic life, his devouring zeal, the conquests of his apostolate. (…)

Following the example of the God of his heart, who gives himself fully without ever leaving himself, Dominic also gives himself to souls without ever descending from the heights where he dwells, without ever leaving the society of the God who possesses him.

Roger Calmel wanted to become such a Dominican, and in truth he did, as the rest of his life will show. His whole life would be summed up in this: to be and to remain, in all circumstances and every day more so, the disciple of Saint Dominic.

Attracted by such an ideal, Father Calmel asked to be admitted into the Dominican order. However, this sudden entry into the order of St. Dominic did not make everyone happy. M”’ Calmel knew her son and his fragile constitution well. And, as a good mother, she was worried about the future of her little Roger. On the other hand, the good peasant woman had become accustomed to the priestly vocation of her son. She was even happy to know that he was a priest in the diocese of Agen, not far from the country and his father’s house. Wouldn’t the one she cherished so much be taken away from her? Could she still benefit from his visits, which were always so consoling? It was only after a year when she was able to visit her

The Dominican novice

Father Vayssière

When he knocked on the door of the narrow rue Espinasse in October 1936, Father Calmel was not only entering a convent. He was asking to enter the Order of St. Dominic, and more precisely the Dominican Province of Toulouse. For a Dominican is said to be a “son” not of a particular convent, but of a particular province. He is adopted by it as a child,

he receives a family spirit that history and men have formed. The Province of Toulouse was deeply marked by the personality of Father Marie-Etienne Vayssière, who had been Provincial since 1932. One must understand the particular grace of the one whom many considered during his lifetime as “a Dominican saint”, in order to have a small idea of the spiritual formation that the young aspirant was going to receive, who, until his death, kept a profound admiration for his first master.

Born on October 29, 1864, the future Father Vayssière entered the Dominican Order in 1887, where he was seized by the grace of “that crystal soul” that was Saint Dominic. He received the Dominican habit from the hands of Blessed Father Cormier on August 3 of the same year. From the time of his novitiate, he developed a deep friendship with Father Pègues, so much so that their fellow students could say, “We no longer separate them, we call them Your two theologians. “

Stricken by a severe cerebral fatigue just after being ordained subdeacon, Brother Marie-Etienne Vayssière was nevertheless able to be ordained a priest on September 19, 1891. Unable to assume the arduous ministry of Dominican preaching, he was assigned to the Sainte-Baume, the famous grotto that sheltered Saint Mary Magdalene, where he remained from April 30, 1900 to 1932.

The destruction of his intellectual faculties had a profound effect on his spirituality. In the harsh ordeals he went through in the years 1920-1923, he wrote:

Annihilation (kenosis) has been the dominant grace of my life. It is a poverty that brought me to the Sainte-Baume, a primordial grace. It is this grace that has followed me all my life… Loss of memory, physical annihilation, impossibility of

preaching, *etc.* God makes up for it in a way, minute by minute. He is the one who does everything. The annihilation is a great grace. The dark night too. It is indispensable to spend

65 - Pire Rzcwuski (lircGévoiiski),/loiiiv>3/ï “viBWemJ/<ii Plon, 1976.p.416.

66 - Frire Philippe Devoucoux du Buysson, o.p.. Cahiers de la Sainte-Baume n 7, ” Un maître spirituel pour tous, le pire Marie Étienne Vayssière “. p. 27.

in this way, following the example of our Savior. We must be so empty, so pure, so stripped of everything, and of ourselves above all, to go to him, and to be for him the supple and fruitful instrument that he wants to find in us… Only he can achieve this so necessary and so total stripping, and he achieves it when we let ourselves be done, when we give ourselves up unreservedly to his good pleasure, with faith, trust and love.

At the end of a long night lived with a spirit of heroic faith, Vayssière was graced with an outstanding Marian grace. It was the Holy Mother of God who pulled him out of his hole, so to speak. At the end of his annual retreat in February 1923, after five years of interior night and spiritual struggle, the great Dominican finally experienced a kind of “resurrection:

In 1923, everything seemed abandoned. That year, I made my retreat with Father Matteo’s books. On the last day, as I was kneeling down to make my consecration to the Sacred Heart, an irresistible force seemed to push me to make it to Mary… It was February 11, 1923, the beginning of a new path where Mary, more and more, put her mark on me.

This man of faith had understood by experience the frankly contemplative dimension of the Dominican life, and he applied himself to transmit it to others. Father Rzewuski, who spent several weeks with Father Vayssière in 1931, testifies:

While there, I was able to observe how he himself lived his doctrine. His confidence in the power of contemplative prayer for the mystical body was very convincing. I often heard him say that, in this field, one acts much more by what one is than by what one says or does. 11 had a deep sense of the contemplative life and its necessity for the apostolate. What attached me personally to him was also his kindness, his clear eyes and his way of listening

Moreover, from the beginning of his priesthood, Father Vayssière was animated by a deep devotion to the holy sacrament of the Mass. When he celebrated, “he was transported to God. His diaphanous face lit up; his eyes, sometimes closed, sometimes raised to heaven, expressed the total tension of his whole being. U sometimes shed abundant tears. All this without ostentation ™. “

67 - In M.‘D. Poinscnct. Air U mu without baggage - Bsoçvphie of Father Marie-Éiienne Vayssière, S.O.S.p.271.

68 ‘ M.-D. Poinscnet.ff/>,or.,p. 189.

69 - Father Rzewuski, op.fi/np. 415.

10-Ibid.

Le,

This profoundly contemplative and apostolic life was to radiate on the Dominican friars of the province of Toulouse. As soon as the novitiate and the study convent were restored in Saint-Maximin, on January 28, 1920, Father Vayssière became its extraordinary confessor. Not content with these quarterly visits, the student brothers liked to go up to the Sainte-Baume to talk with the holy religious who had won their respect and admiration. So much so that, in 1928, the “hermit” of the Sainte-Baume was elected prior of the convent of Saint-Maximin. This was a very wise choice because of the troubles that will soon be mentioned. But Father Vayssière refused. Instead, he had to accept his election as Prior Provincial on September 14, 1932, at the age of 68. He would remain at his post until his death on September 14, 1940.

Roger Calmel into the Order in October 1936 and transmitted to him the spirit that animated him: a theological confidence in the power of God who acts in the weakness of man, a filial and simple devotion to Our Lady of the Rosary, the cult of the Mass, an authentically contemplative theology and life, a filial and docile love for Saint Dominic. These were the main lines of Father Calmel’s thought and life.

Clothing

It was a young clergyman of small stature (1 meter 63) with dark brown hair, who presented himself at the Dominican convent of the street Espinasse, in Toulouse, in October 1936.

After the time of postulancy of rule, the young postulant was accepted for the vesting which was fixed for December 7. On the morning of that great day, Father Bruckberger asked the young candidate to accompany him to the Basilica of Saint-

Sernin to serve him Mass: he wanted to celebrate it in the chapel of the ambulatory where the head of Saint Thomas Aquinas was venerated in a beautiful golden shrine.

71 . “Father Vayssière was also a great devotee of the rosary. One day when he went to Marseilles by bus, he told me on his way back that he had recited twelve rosaries during this trip! “(Pète Rzcwuski. op. cil., p, 418). To those who told him that they had difficulty in reciting the rosary, he replied: “Come on, that’s not what’s important or essential; what is important is looking at God. “(Father Rzcwuski, ap. cil., p. 419). The very morning of his death, Father Vayssière wrote these few words: <cAve Maria. My own glory will be the reflection that springs from the Iront of my mother. Saint Therese of the Child Jesus. “

The worst Roger-Thomas Calmel

I can still see myself walking quickly in the Place du Capitole and along the Rue du Taur, silent, next to the great Bruck who was advancing with great steps. It was the day I took the habit, and they called me Brother Marie-Thomas. Bruck, who knew this, had chosen me on purpose to serve mass at the altar of Saint Thomas.

One can imagine the joy of the former seminarian at the news that he would henceforth bear the name of the prince of theology whom he revered so much and who had done him so much good up to that hour. This meant a whole program of life and preaching that he would never fail to carry out. A few years later, Father Calmel, who liked to unite his baptismal name to that of his religion, summed up his impressions in a poem that was both pleasant and prayerful: My name is Roger Thomas.

Rodrigue is a name of prowess,

Thomas is silence and wisdom.

What will happen to me?

With such different saints?

I come to you, Virgin Mary.

You will guard me mightily.

You will make my heart, my life In the doctrine and the fights Be worthy of the saints I pray.

Of Saint Roger and Saint Thomas".

The joy of this ceremony remained moderate, however. For, in spite of its many failures and the regular waltz of its governments, the Third Republic remained faithful to its anticlericalism. The situation of religious was most precarious. Many were still in exile, and those who were tolerated had to suffer the vexations of the laws. Their situation is very well described in a leaflet published by the DRAC (the League for the Rights of Religious Veterans) between the two wars, which Father Calmel treasured;

Religious people are outlawed ten times over:

- Once they were outlawed, because they were alone in France and could not freely associate. If three good sisters want to get together to care for the sick or to pray to God, a special law must be passed in the Chamber and the Senate each time (law of July 1, 1901, art. 13).

- Twice outlawed, because only in France, after having been authorized by a law, a simple decree in the Council of

Ministers is enough to suppress them (art. 13), without trial, without offence and without possible appeal.

- Three times outlawed, because they are the only ones in France who can be prosecuted and condemned without the law having defined what the offence of congregation consists of; their fate is left to the arbitrariness of the judges.

- Outlawed four times, because only in France, once "authorized", they would be required, under penalty of prison and fine, to show "at any requisition" their books, the detailed accounts of their receipts and expenses and the nominative state of all the members (art. 15); regime of suspects.

- Out of the law five times, because only in France, they cannot appear on the will of a brother, a sister, an uncle, without this will being presumed null as made for the benefit of the congregation (art. 17).

- Out of the law six times, because only in France, they do not have the right to own or acquire any property, even to raise orphans or to care for the elderly, without being presumed to be an intermediary, which makes the deed of acquisition voidable at any time, even three, four, five years after the purchase (art. 17).

- Outlawed seven times, because alone in France, once driven out of their homes, they could not even seek asylum with friends without exposing themselves to fines and imprisonment, for reconstituting a Congregationalist establishment (art. 13, 14, 16).

- Eight times outlawed, because only in France, authorized or not, they are forbidden to teach of any kind. Even if they were agrégés, doctors or members of the Institute, they could not teach, not even to read and write, not even to

plane a board or draw a furrow (law of July 7, 1904; law of July 25, 1919 on technical education).

- Out of the law nine times, because only in France, the presence of only one in a house of teaching or of bienfeisance is enough to authorize the closing (art. 14).

- Outlawed ten times because, alone in France, after having been used abroad and in the colonies, they see themselves treated in their own country, as undesirables and pariahs.

A law that makes so many exceptions for honest citizens,

- who dedicate their lives to the relief of the unfortunate, to the care of the sick, to the education of children.

LepèreRoger-Thotnas Cdmel

- who carry abroad the good name of France,

- who did not bargain their blood for the defense of the country, is an unjust and wrong law...

Father Calmcl was definitely pursued by war, political or religious, throughout his life. It was in a climate of latent persecution, or at least of suspicion, that he would henceforth wear the livery of Saint Dominic, like the flag of a soldier of Christ and of the Church.

Saint-Maximin

As soon as he was born, young Brother Marie-Thomas was sent to the convent of studies in Saint-Maximin, in the Var, to begin his novitiate. He remained there until 1941.

When one arrives by car by the road to Aix-en-Provence, one is struck by the majestic monument built on a slight hill and

grouping the houses of the village, tightened around it like chicks under the wings of the hen. The main street of Saint-Maximin leads the traveler to the foot of the western facade of the basilica, which gives him a strange impression. The construction of the building could never be completed, and the nave ends with a wall of mismatched stones. The Basilica of St. Mary Magdalene thus gives the visitor his first message: the beauty of the earth can only be partial, the most successful life will only become obsolete; look towards Heaven, passing by, to find perfection.

As soon as he enters the building, the postulant is invited to listen to its stone language. Before opening the books or even speaking with his teachers, he receives his first lesson in Dominican life from the ancient monuments that will shelter him for many years.

When he first arrived on the scene, Father Lacordaire expressed his admiration as follows: “Saint-Maiimin, miracle of stone and light! “Indeed, once he has crossed the entrance gate, the visitor is struck by the height of the Gothic vault, by the elegance of the columns, by the light that the large stained glass windows of the nave let in abundantly. It is a vision of peace that invites one to pray. The novice understood at once what awaited him: he had come to learn to pray.

74 - Father N, followed closely behind Brother Calmcl as he entered the Order in 1943. To the question of “Oh, yes! The buildings are there.

The Dominican novice

This majestic church is not a cathedral but a basilica, that is, a place of pilgrimage. It is a stone case that protects and honors the relics of a great saint, the converted sinner, the

contemplative of Bethany, the witness of Christ's resurrection, Saint Mary Magdalene.

A text from the fifth or sixth century tells us that St. Mary Magdalene, after many years of hard penance and silent contemplation, died "on the eleventh day before the calendar of August" (July 22), in the same place where the crypt of the present basilica is located:

Bishop Maximin, taking the most holy body of Mary Magdalene, embalmed it with various aromatics and placed it in an honorable mausoleum and erected a basilica of beautiful architecture over her blessed members'*.

Archaeological excavations in 1994-1996 uncovered the foundations and confirmed the existence of a baptistery and a basilica that must be dated between the 15th and 6th centuries.

Unfortunately, traces of the remains of the saint of Bethany were lost in the 6th century, at the time of the Muslim invasions. In 1267, the monks of Vézelay believed they had found these relics. But the very small number of bones they found suggested that the entire body of the saint was elsewhere. The son of Charles I", the future Charles II, then prince of Salerno, nephew of St. Louis, undertook research to find the tomb of the apostle of the resurrection of Christ in Provence. The remains of Saint Mary Magdalene were discovered on December 9, 1276. They were found in an alabaster tomb from the fourth century, with a sign bearing the following words

In the year 710 of the nativity of Our Lord, on the sixth day of December, during the night and secretly under the reign of the most pious Eudes, king of the Franks,* at the time of the ravages of the perfidious nation of the Saracens, this

body of the very dear and venerable Saint Mary Magdalene was, for fear of the said perfidious nation, transferred from her alabaster tomb to this marble tomb, after having removed the body of Sidonius, because it was better hidden there.

75 - This historical information is taken mainly from the text of Ephrem Lauzière o.p., U baailiquc de la Madeleine à Saim-Maximin en Provence, published in 200.5 by the Fraternité sainte Maric-Madclcinc. Father Lauzière (1907-2000) was a professor at the convent of Saint-Ma.timin for many years until the departure of the Dominicans in 1957.

76 -11 is Eudes, Duke of Aquitaine, legitimately entitled to the title of “King of the Franks”.

Father Roger-Thomas Cabnel

The elevation of the body of the saint took place on May 5, 1280, in the presence of the archbishops, bishops and abbots of Provence, and the count himself. The bones were placed in a silver casket enriched with various gold ornaments, made by one of Charles II’s best goldsmiths. From then on, pilgrims continued to flock. The small priory of Saint-Maximin was then run by two or three Benedictines from the Abbey of Saint-Victor in Marseille. The latter was dormant and could not ensure either the worship of the relics or the reception of the numerous pilgrimages and pilgrims. This is why the count asked the pope to entrust the custody of Saint-Maximin and the Sainte-Baume to the preaching friars, to whom he was linked by an old and fervent friendship. The pope wrote four bulls in this sense on April 7 and 8, 1295. Then, Charles II, king of Sicily and count of Provence, granted all sorts of exemptions to those who would come and settle around the basilica to provide for the needs of the pilgrims. This was the origin of the city of Saint-

Maximin. As early as November 19, 1295, the king supported the construction of the buildings and generously financed their realization.

The Dominicans accepted and immediately began the construction of a church and a convent of considerable size. Before the end of 1295, twenty friars were assigned to Saint-Maximin and four to the Sainte-Baume. At the General Chapter in Venice in 1297, the capitulars unanimously proclaimed Mary Magdalene as the second patroness of the Order.

The first stage of the work lasted only three and a half years, so that the choir of the church could be blessed as early as 1300. At the end of 1316, the community was able to move into the walls of the convent. They only left because of the sacrilegious violence of the 1789 revolution. The religious did not return until 1859 with Father Lacordaire, after an exile of 70 years.

It was there, at the feet of the insignificant relics of St. Mary Magdalene, at the school and in the grace of the “Apostle of the Apostles”, that many generations of Dominicans were to be trained for the apostolic life. As soon as they entered, the immense stone and glass basilica gave them the image of their Order, of its work of light and pacification in the Church and in the world. Just as this majestic monument had its foundations in the silent crypt of St. Mary Magdalene, the ministry of preaching will take its roots, its vitality and strength, in the contemplative life. As the place where the saint died forms the center of the basilica and the convent, the heart to heart with God, the “best part” (Le 10), the Rabotmi (“My good Master”, Jn 20) of the great convert would be the hidden and vital core of Dominican life.

The Church and the Dominican Order are indebted to this mervelll Nephew of St. Louis, father of the future St. Louis of Brignoles, g friars preachers, defender of Pope Boniface VIII, Charles II very well the carholic France of the XIII' century. It was he who decorated the relics of Saint Mary Magdalene, it was he who obtained from the

the young religious was immediately introduced into the convent of the time, there was then an ati

Father Roger-Thomas Calmel

later with a real veneration'*. Dausse returned from the missions in Brazil in September 1931 and became successively Father Master of the students and Master of the novices. Father Rzewuski had the joy of being under his direction during the last year of his preparation for the priesthood. He described him as "a man of God, a good theologian, able to synthesize theology, spirituality and priesthood, (…) at the same time so good and understanding and totally forgetful of himself" and above all, "someone deeply contemplative. He died on February 5, 1955, of a "sweet and silent death, as he himself had been struggling throughout his life. It was really the

Under this guidance, both human and deeply supernatural, the former seminarian from the diocese of Agen was to be introduced to the secrets of Dominican life. For it is not only a question, in a novitiate, of receiving a general spiritual formation, but also of acquiring the "characteristic and permanent way of seeing, wanting and feeling*" which defines the spirit of the religious order to which one belongs.

To this end, the novice will benefit from courses and private interviews with the master who will be his true spiritual father. The latter will teach him the laws of contemplative

prayer*’, will give him a taste for solitude and study*’, will educate him to a simple and joyful common life, and will make him see everything in the light of the proper and special end of the Order, contemplata, in oratiom videlicet ac studio, aliis tradere*’.

The insistence of the constitutions on love of God and neighbor and on common life is significant. For if the law of charity is indeed the golden rule of all Christian life, it is above all the great secret of the apostolic life. This double commandment of charity, which is one, explains and assures the unity of the contemplative life and the active life in the ministry of preaching. The love of God impels the brother preacher to unite himself to God in

78 - PCRC Glmcl dedicated “piously and faithfully to the vcnctable Father Armand-Nicoltis Dausse, of hcurcusc memory”, his work Sur nos routes dexil, les Béatitudes (1960).

79 ‘ Pire Rzcwusky, op. (il., p. 420.

80 - Father Cosu Rossetti, “Despiritu sodetatisJesu”, in Collin, Culte des vaux. p. 92.

81 ‘ The Dominican religious will have to “preach and teach from the abundance and fullness of his contemplation, following the example of St. Dominic who spoke only to God or about God”

82 - “Father Maitrc must make them more and more diligent in solitude and assiduous work

The love for God in the son of St. Dominic must be intense enough to spring forth into love for the poor. The love for God in the son of St. Dominic must be intense enough to

spring forth into love of neighbor. 11 must be as wide as the world of souls to be saved.

In order to reach this superior balance which marries union with God to the ministry of preaching, love of God to the mercy of truth, in order to understand the great audacity of St. Dominic, the candidate is initiated very early into the text of the rule and constitutions. For “every set of human laws reflects the face of its author*”*. This study of Dominican legislation would play a great role in Father Calmel’s religious life. What follows will show how the very Dominican understanding of the laws of the Order and of religious life, which he acquired from the novitiate, guided him when he had to collaborate in the reform of the constitutions of the Dominican teaching sisters of the Holy Name of Jesus.

Four points struck him particularly. First of all, the Constitutions forcefully underline the deliberately contemplative note of the life of the friar preachers. Then, they shine by their juridical wisdom which knows how to mark the least of the observances with the stamp of the specific end of the Order of Saint Dominic, which is “the salvation of souls through the ministry of preaching”. Then, always in the name of the end of the Order, and following the example of St. Dominic, the constitutions leave a great deal of room for dispensation. The latter is no longer considered as a tolerance or as a hindrance; it is inscribed among the monastic observances. Last but not least, St. Dominic particularly influenced the religious legislation of the whole Church by explicitly affirming that the rule did not oblige on pain of sin.

This last aspect of Dominican legislation, which later became obligatory for the universal Church, deserves to be considered in order to understand the spirit of Father Calmel

and his very acute sense of the freedom of souls. The good Lord himself explained to St. Catherine of Siena (1378) the origin and the reason for such precision:

This is how Dominic your father arranged his boat. He rigged it with the three ropes of obedience, continence and true poverty. Discipline is all royal: he did not want his rule to be obligatory on pain of mortal sin. It is I, the true light, who has enlightened us on this point. My Providence has had regard in this to the weakness of the less perfect: for although all those who observe the constitution

84 - Pius XII, Address on the occasion of the eighth centenary of the Decree of Graticn, April 22, 1932.

are perfect, there are nevertheless always those in this life who are less perfect than the others. In this way, both the perfect and the non-perfect are at ease aboard this boat. In this way Dominic is in harmony with my truth, not wanting the sinner to die, but to be converted and live. Therefore, his religion is all wide, all joyful, all fragrant: it is itself a garden of delights".

The intentions of Providence are very clear here. These were also the intentions of St. Dominic, who wanted to give his Order this note of joy, interior freedom and peace of conscience. Each one should feel "at ease", move forward at his own speed, and everything is done so that "he may live". This novelty is certainly not a call to laxity and laxity. The Dominican legislation foresees severe penalties for those who would voluntarily move away from it. But precisely this severity has as its goal freedom and peace of mind. The constitutions and observances are there to establish the religious before God and to maintain him there. Nothing

must hinder the intimate movement of his heart towards God.

This generosity, combined with the sometimes fierce strength of the preacher, had particularly struck one of Father Calmel's favorite authors. Ernest Psichari (August 22, 1914), a Dominican Tertiary, who was about to compose his Journey of the Centurion, expressed his desire to be imbued with "that sovereign strength, that broad adhesion to God, that moral and spiritual health which, in my opinion, characterize our beloved Order, and which, moreover, suit a soldier's soul so well.

U wrote to the prior of the Dominican convent of Rijckholt, in Holland, who had just received him into the Third Order of Saint Dominic:

My dear Father, what one sees in you is so beautiful that one remains wounded for life. What a victorious and serene grace! What beautiful souls of purity and candor! What true faith, all nourished by eternal light! Perhaps what I admire most is that, you know, through the grace of Saint Dominic, they avoid the common pitfall of turning in on themselves, the lack of interior observation and thus, in a way, the knowledge of themselves, and finally the attachment to human things, whatever they may be. It seems to me that there one lives in that immaterial clarity where there is only the Father, the Son and their mutual love the Holy Spirit, in that region of

85 - Saint Catherine of Siena. Dûloguis. 1.5. ch. 3, De l'obeissanev

86 - Leetre of 25 ,anv "r 1914 to the Dominican eoinvn. of Rijcieolt. A, A.-M Cioichon £o ftrd "nd4prridod""men "i "Ali",l>aris,UuBConard,1933,p,29g.

The Dominican novice gy

the supernatural intelligence which is really the announcement and the promise of the beatific vision".

It was at this school that Brother Marie-Thomas Calmcl was to be formed during his novitiate year at Saint-Maximin. Everything was looking good for him at the beginning of his religious life. Nevertheless, the young brother's health was already very fragile and he could only bear the rigors of the observances with great difficulty. He fell ill and had to be sent to a specialist in Lyon. Father Calmel would later tell us:

I remember, in 1937, my metabolism done in Lyon by one of the great pontiffs of metabolism and endocrine glands, 11 was suffocated, so much so that he wanted to do it again two days later. The result was the same. I was neither worse nor better off. The great pontiff - who had kept me for a month (I was staying at the convent in Lyon) - had at least the good idea to give me only bread crumb remedies, telling me that it was delicate to intervene in the endocrines*".

Unfortunately, the superiors did not immediately see the danger and the need for their novice to have "dispensations and a relaxed life". Father Calmel would later see this "imprudence" and "temerity" as a grace, but he would soon have to suffer the consequences. He was nevertheless admitted to temporary vows which he pronounced on November 1, 1937.

Theology

One remembers Roger Calmel's zeal, sometimes even excessive, for intellectual work from the minor seminary of BonEncontre, and then at the Pius XI seminary in Toulouse. Such ardor derived from his love of the truth. One can imagine the enthusiasm with which the young Dominican

friar would throw himself into the study of theology. All the more so since this work would henceforth take on a new dimension. U would be the place of his identification with Saint Dominic.

The contemporaries of the holy founder of the Friars Preachers use a conventional formula to designate a particularly contemplative soul: “He spoke only to God or only of God. “To speak to God is the fact of contemplation. To speak of God, etymologically, is to be a theologian. Theological studies in the school of Saint John

87 - Letter to Father B.arn.ibé Augier o.p., November 20, 1913,r” A.-M.Goichon, ap. al., p. 234.

The works of St. Thomas Aquinas are thus much more than an acquisition of religious science. They are a school of contemplative wisdom*. It is faith that scrutinizes God, that does everything possible to cast a simple and penetrating glance at the light of God. Theology is the faith that seeks vision, according to the expression of Saint Anselm /da qiuerens intellectum. This is why theology is, for the son of St. Dominic, the daily food of his contemplation. In this sense, Father Vayssière warned his brothers against intellectualism, against an emendation that would not effectively lead to intimate union with God, the source of all light:

Beware, we are often intellectual Thomists, but we are very rarely so in our spirituality”.

For sure, this study is also conceived in view of serving one day the good of souls. This means, for the teacher as well as for the student, a duty of clarity and precision, a very loyal intellectual rigor, a clear perception of the principles, the

assiduous contact with the sources of faith which are the Magisterium, the Holy Scriptures and the Fathers of the Church. In a conference given in 1964, Father Calmel summarized the four great principles of the theological method that he had received at Saint-Maximin ‘L

1) The starting point of theology is the Catholic faith, which charity impels us to scrutinize:

Theology seeks to penetrate the given of the faith… It starts from the principles which are none other than the articles of faith, by an intelligence of the faithful suitably armed.

- The intelligence of the infidel (…) cannot obviously penetrate this

- It is the love of God that must apply the intelligence to this effort of penetration; a theologian without love, that is to say, without contemplation, is a monster and does a bad job.

2) What then is the theological place par excellence? It is the master of faith, the magisterium of the Church of all time:

the given of the faith formulated, transmitted by the ordinary or solemn magisterium. Aberration of the so-called evangelical “resourcing

91 ■ Father Vayssière, Caàimàr il ia/Mcftivnie, p. 29.

92 ■ Notes from a caïucric to the moinn of Maylis (Landes) on the great articulations of the chcolo

The novice dominic.

Who scorns definitions. Benefit instead to meditate in the Gospel and in Denzinger”: the mass, justification, sin - and

first of all the Incarnation.

I humbly receive the gift of faith transmitted by the Holy Church. From there, using my reason, a theological reflection is exercised”,

3) To do this, is the theologian left to himself? No, he obediently puts himself in the school of the great theologians of the past, mainly the common doctor of the Church:

Naturally, I have a master: Saint Thomas. I am not someone who invents theology 1 I am a disciple.

4) From this great Dominican, one acquires the correctness of thought. For, in order to deepen the given of faith, one needs a well adjusted instrument, that is to say a healthy and realistic philosophy which admits the primacy of being and which knows how to reason by analogy;

Thus reflection on the given of faith and by a believer’s intelligence which has the sense of being, - consequently an intelligence armed by the traditional philosophy of being (the philosophy of Aristotle and Thomism). - Stupidity of a so-called theology which wants to “assume” the Germanic philosophies against nature, that is to say the philosophies fascinated by the becoming: Hegel especially.

The being of things is obviously constituted by their being and not by their becoming, which is only a consequence of their being (as elementary as this is, modern thought does not see it or refuses to admit it) (…) To have a sense of the transcendence of the mysteries, therefore to accept to reason by analogy.

93 - Enchiridion of the principal doctrinal statements of the councils and popes.

94 - This principle of Catholic rheology which sees in the immutable magisterium of the Church the rule of faith is found in several of Father Calmel's works. In 1956, he committed the Dominican teaching sisters of the Holy Name of Jesus to be "a faithful, living and original echo of the magisterium of the Holy Church" and thus to be "faithful to Tradition" (School and Holiness. 1956, p. 53). In 1957, the

In the Christian doctrine class, to open the heart and mind of the child to the integral Revelation, it is necessary to offer him not only the Scriptures, but also the dogmatic definitions of the Church, by translating them or helping him to translate them. They are conveniently collected in Denzinger's Enchiridion. (...) To know only the word of God, the revealed given, is not enough" (École chrétienne renouvelée, Téqui, 1958. p. 56).

95 - A concept and the term that expresses it are said to be analogous when they are intrinsically partially similar. Analogy is opposed to univocity and equivocity.

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But all this is unthinkable if one reasons about the Incarnation not in terms of analogy but according to univocity (Arius, Nestorius, Luther), and especially according to the univocity of a mind that does not even apprehend with accuracy the reality (here, man) that one magnifies inordinately; this is the case of Teilhard. For if Arius is heretical in maintaining that Jesus is only a man. Teilhard, who is heretical in maintaining that Christ is a man propelling towards the ultra-human, does not even know any more what is a man.

Beyond these general principles, we can grasp the personal way in which the future Father Calmel approached his study

of theology. In an article published in 1967, he refuted a preacher of the C.P.M.I. (Centre de Pastorale des Missions à l'Intérieur) who affirmed: "We have called sins by their very concrete names and this is not a Thomistic definition (I am a Thomist!) which our people would not have understood. After having shown by very telling examples how it is possible to make the faithful understand the great principles of the theology of Saint Thomas, the Dominican adds:

When you say in substance: I am a preacher of Thomistic formation, but in my preaching on sin I call sin by its very concrete names and I want nothing to do with the Thomistic definition, well, I fear that your Thomism has remained alien to the concrete; a kind of ideal construction outside your perception of the concrete, and like a game of the mind which would not be nourished by the most personal and daily experience. I know that some Thomists practice Thomism in this way, but I also believe them to be followers of St. Thomas only by quid pro quo, at most, as Peregrinus rightly observed," they are exact and conscientious archivists of the master's doctrine, but not vitaleraent Thomists. This is not how I understand Thomism, nor the order it establishes in the whole of intellectual life and in the interior life itself (p. 38).

The study of theology was for Brother Marie-Thomas Calmel a true meditation taking its starting point in the elementary propositions of faith and in the experience of life. It was not primarily a matter of erudition, but a wisdom which illuminated both the intelligence and the mind.

96 - "Sin and Preaching", Itinerary n. 113, May 1967, p. 31 and following.

97 - - Itinéraires n'72, April 1963.p.40ct following: see also the Cm of the article on the coiucniplarion,

practical life. It was this realism that would later give him such depth and accuracy of judgment, and would make him the great theologian and mystic who would soon manifest himself.

The shadows in the picture

All the saints of Heaven were once again present to welcome Bro Calmel, this time on the occasion of his perpetual profession, which he pronounced on November 1, 1940. The hearts were full of joy on this great feast day, especially that of the profts who were thus incorporated forever into his dear father Saint Dominic and his beloved Order. But the joy of all was covered by a veil of anxiety and sadness. How could one not think of the tragic events that were tearing France and Europe apart?

- The Second World War

For a year, the news of the world made all hearts tremble and cry. On September 1, 1939, the German army entered Poland and carried out numerous massacres. The same day, the French government declared general mobilization. On September 3, England and France declared war on Germany. It was then the time of the “phony war” where the forces at stake observed each other and hesitated to engage in conflicts. The very noisy French Communist Party, after having called for “unity against Hitler’s aggression”, condemned the “imperialist war” of France and England against the 11 th Reich to defend Russia, Germany’s ally at the time, and accepted the partition of Poland. The president of the P.C., Maurice Thorez, joined the USSR on October 4, 1939. In May 1940, Germany launched a “lightning war”. On the 10th of that month, the German air

force bombed Dutch and Belgian airfields. The German troops were on the Meuse River on the 12th and crossed it on the 13th. In three days, they dislocated the French front. Belgium surrendered on 28 May. Then came the debacle. Paris was occupied on 14 June. The Germans were in Brest and Lyon on June 20, and in La Rochelle on June 22. In total, eight million people took the road to exodus, sometimes in frightening conditions, between May 10 and June 22. The German advance allowed them to reach a line from Bordeaux to Aix-les-Bains via Clermont-Ferrand. When the armistice came into effect on June 25, one million four hundred thousand French soldiers were prisoners of the Germans. The government withdrew to Bordeaux. President Reynaud resigned on June 16. To succeed him in this extreme situation, Marshal Pétain was called, who, despite his advanced age, accepted the position.

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The same day, he ordered to stop fighting. The next day, General de Gaulle, well protected in England, launched his famous appeal to continue the resistance.

The Third Republic, persecutor of the Church, after having taken a great part of responsibility in the atrocities of the 14-18 war, disappeared in this lamentable disaster.

What was Marie-Tbomas doing in the midst of these national ruins? He gave himself to St. Dominic through perpetual vows in order to give himself to God and to his Church. This is a striking summary of the whole life of Father Calmel.

- LepèrePègues

Another sorrow, another concern was winning over the most lucid hearts of the Dominican Order and of the Church, that of a certain worldly and liberal spirit which was smouldering

among some. The convent of Saint-Maximin had indeed been shaken, about ten years before, by a very serious crisis which had left after-effects in the life of the community. It is necessary to have some idea of this in order to understand the environment in which Brother Marie-Thomas Calmel was to carry out his studies. The person who had been the focus of this crisis was the regent of studies, the very venerable Father Pègues.

Born in 1866, he entered the Order at the same time as Father Vayssière of whom he became a great friend. He was soon noticed by his superiors for his superior mind and his knowledge of St. Thomas Aquinas. In 1909, he was appointed professor at ÏAagelkum where he taught theology. Good-natured, gentle and pleasant, Father Pègues was much loved by his students. From 1909 until 1931, he published a literal commentary on the Summa Theologica, which received the personal congratulations of Pope Pius X. He remained in Rome until 1921, when he was appointed regent of studies at the convent of Saint-Maximin. At that time, the community had about thirty students, fathers and novices.

In 1926, the sky darkened. Hilarion Tapie, Father Provincial, was seized with a report hostile to Father Pègues, signed by five members (including Father Lajeunie). In it, the Regent of Studies was reproached for sticking to the text of St. Thomas, for not relying sufficiently on the professors and for accepting the students' complaints too favorably. They were careful to specify which ones The report seemed

98 - In Jacques Prévotat, La tatholi^ua et CAction française. Histoire d'une condamnation 18991939, Fayard. 2001, p. 487.

forget that the good Father had largely done his proofs for almost twenty years and that he had never stopped receiving praise from his superiors.

The dispute would have ended there if it had not been for the much more delicate matter of the Action Française.

Both the form and the substance of the quarrel with the monarchist movement could not leave Father Pègucs indifferent and silent. When Cardinal Andrieu published his famous letter of accusation, the Dominican expressed his indignation. He even wrote directly to the Pope on November 20, 1926, but received no reply, not even an acknowledgement of receipt.

After the condemnation of Action Française on December 29, 1926, Father Pègues was suspected of sympathy for the monarchist journal. The Archbishop of Aix, Mgr Rivière, who was so close to the circles of Action Française, thought it his duty to make a declaration to the Catholic students of Aix on January 20, comparing to Luthet or Jansenius the theologians who authorized what the Pope defended. Everyone could see an allusion to the regent of the studies of Saint-Maximin.

The latter protested several times, even in writing, against those who exploited his name to make him a militant opponent of the pope. He was then reproached for not using the same language in public as in private.

In March 1927, Cardinal Gasparri demanded an investigation at Saint-Maximin. Father Lacomme, sub-prior and master of novices, was put in charge of the investigation. The result was rather favorable to Father Pègues.

In the first half of May 1927, Father Betnardot went to Rome where he presented new grievances against Father Pègues. Pius XI ordered Cardinal Gasparri to go to the Master General, Father Paredes, to tell him that the Pope “is not satisfied with the investigation and that he thinks he can say that it does not reflect the whole reality. A new visitor was appointed, Father Ricagno, assistant to the Master General. The visit began on May 27 and lasted until mid-June. Faced with the two clans that divided the convent, the Visitor chose not to be confrontational. He pointed out that the intolerance of which Father Pègues was accused was also found among his opponents. But the atmosphere had become such, since January, that the serenity necessary for study had disappeared. In order for it to return as soon as possible, it was necessary to seek calm and silence. In the absence of the provincial, Father Tapie, any decision was premature. All in all, the report was not unfavorable to Father Pègues and even noted that there was a spirit of fraternal and filial solidarity towards him.

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In fact, Father Bernardot’s trip to Rome in May had been little appreciated at Saint-Maximin. It had heightened suspicions of a plot against the regent of studies and against the convent. The founder of La Vie Spiriimlj felt a climate of mistrust, not to say rejection, rise around him. The mission that the Pope had entrusted to him to found a new review, La l’i, mtellectmlle. which would free French Catholics from the grip of the ideology of the French Action seemed compromised. He then saw no other way out, to unravel the situation, than the direct intervention of Maritain with the pope: “We have no hope but in you,” he wrote to him on August 28, 1927, with a letter of recommendation from the nuncio. The Parisian philosopher met Pope Pius XI on September 6 and 7, 1927. Maritain was very impressed by

the determination of the Pope in the questions of the French Association, the mission of Father Bernardot and the convent of Saint-Maximin. The same day, a papal order was sent to the General Curia of the Dominicans demanding the immediate departure of Father Pègues and the retention of Father Bernardot in the royal convent. The decision was notified to him on September 14. Bernardot wrote to the Pope to assure him of his obedience and asked that those who had been persecuting him “be finally rid of their evil designs”. He had to leave the convent of Saint-Maximin on September 23 and go to the convent of Biarritz, then to Pistoia. Bernardot’s situation was very difficult at the convent because of the divisions, so he was “transferred” with Father Lajeunii to the province of Paris in April 1928. There he moved La Vie Spiritiellta to the project of creating La Vie Inlectuelle, the first issue of which came out in October 1928. This was the beginning of what would become the Juvisy editions, the ancestors of the Cerf editions.

After the two investigations which had been rather favorable to him, Father Pègues had the right to believe himself the victim of an injustice. He then wrote:

) I was struck without any avowed motive. The visit had led, on July 2, to a papal blank, officially notified on July 12. What has happened since then? I can’t be blamed for anything in the steps officially requested. Was there anything else? Let them say so. And if it came from the group that is pursuing me, then let the abscess be emptied before the Holy See, and let them ask, with my rehabilitation, for the exemplary punishment of the slanderers. I cannot return to Saint-Maximin

99 - Letter to Pope Pico XI. 23 scptnnbii 1927.

He died in 1936, the same year that Father Calmcl entered the order.

In spite of the lifting of the excommunication of the Action Française by Pope Pius XII in 1939, and in spite of very good superiors who were unanimously recognized for their wisdom and goodness, this painful affair had left scars in the life of the community. For it was more than a personal quarrel. Through a cautious attitude towards the movement of Charles Maurras, a certain doctrinal intransigence was aimed at, a reaction against secularism and against modernism, a sometimes severe criticism of contemporary philosophies, which attracted many minds. It was an integral part of the mission of the Dominican Order.

Faced with such a situation, how was Brother Marie-Thomas to react? No more than during the jousts that disturbed the peace of the Catholic Institute during his first years of study, Gagnol's son did not enter the arena. He observed. Above all, he prayed and saw these tensions as a stimulus to study and reach the top. In the quarrels that shook the world and the Church, he had to direct the eyes of Christians towards the primary truth; he had to shed the strong light of Saint Thomas Aquinas on the errors of the time. He began his preaching by setting an example.

More than ever before, Brother Marie-Thomas devoted himself to study. But his natural ardor and his love of the truth were to play tricks on him once again. His excessive work, linked to the rigors of the observances of the convent of Saint-Maximin, weakened his already fragile health and caused a veritable cerebral anemia. He would open up about it many years later: “During my studies at Saint-Maximin, I spent a year or more living on dispensations, not doing what

the others did (and in a community, this is not easy…); I was a bit of a misfit and a man apart. “But the wisdom of the young religious and the prudence of his superiors saved this precious vocation: “If I had not had the courage to do so, I would certainly not be writing to you

The state of mind of the young religious at the end of his studies at Saint-Maximin is very well summarized in a note he wrote at the end of his pilgrimage to Rome in 1953. Seized by the strong feeling of belonging to a great

of Biarritz, on 30 September

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family, of being the living cell of an immense mystical body, the order of Saint Dominic, he sang of his joy in sharing his grace and his mission;

Naturally in Rome, and with what joy as a son and brother, I found again the Dominican sanctity; our fart in Santa Sabina and in San Sisto il Vecchio; the body of St. Catherine and of Angelico in the Minerva. More than anywhere else, I felt in Rome that our Order was of the Church, that its mission was one of illumination and clarity, that we had to live and act hidden in the light, that it is through the light that we must heal the world of its horrors; as joyful brothers of the Angelic Doctor, of Blessed Angelico and of the Virgin Catherine, as most loving sons of Him who gave to the world the order of the Pugilesfidei et vera mundi lumina (fighters of the faith and true lights of the world)

5

Priest of Jesus Christ

At the end of his theological studies, Brother Marie-Thomas Calmel was admitted to the priestly ordination. At last the day had arrived that he had glimpsed from the hills of Gagnol and that had led him like a star to the minor seminary of Agen, to the Pius XI seminary of Toulouse and to Saint-Ma.vimin. He was to become a participant in the priesthood of Our Lord Jesus Christ for the glory of God and the salvation of souls.

The joy of the newly ordained is expressed in a text he wrote some years later in which he expresses his filial affection for St. Dominic: I love St. Dominic because he is a very holy priest of Jesus Christ. He always thought of being a priest. And not only was he a blameless priest (which does not mean holiness) but he was a priest who was always totally taken by the Lord Jesus.

He said Mass while weeping and he could not see the cities of men, during his travels, from the top of some hill, without starting to weep. He had understood, and at what dizzying depth, those words of the Eucharist which sum up the whole life of the priest, all his belonging to the Eucharistic heart of Jesus and to his mystical body which he forms with sinners of all kinds: “This is the chalice of my blood (…) poured out for you and for the human multitude:

Father Calmel did not dissociate the priesthood from his Dominican vocation, quite the contrary. Since he would be a priest, he wanted to be a holy priest. And it was precisely for this reason, to live more surely in priestly holiness, that he had entered the Order of St. Dominic. His ordination was therefore

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at the same time the summit of a long ascent and the crowning of his Dominican vocation.

The priestly ideal

The ceremony was set for the Saturday of Silientes in 1941, 29 mm. The bishop of Toulon, Mgr Brulé des Varannes, was asked to confer the priestly ordination which took place in the chapel of the Sisters of Saint-Mauri Toulon. During his sermon, the pontiff evoked the speech of Jesus after the Last Supper and invited the new priest to make it the object of his meditations. This was a very wise choice. The one who would have to live his priesthood in the most terrible nights of the world and of the Church absolutely needed to drink in the strong words of life pronounced by Christ on Holy Thursday; “Let not your heart be troubled” (Jn 14:1); “In that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you” (Jn 14:20); “I have told you these things so that my joy may be in you and your joy may be complete” (Jn 15,11); “If the world hates you, know that it hated me first” (Jn 15,18); “I have told you these things so that you may have peace in me. You will have tribulations in the world, but be confident, I have overcome the world” (Jn 16,33); “Fart, sanctify them in the truth” (Jn 17,17).

From now on, he had to apply himself to becoming a holy priest, “a priest consumed in love” as he would later say “A

His priestly ideal is reflected in the image of his ordination.

On the front side appears a reproduction of the beautiful mosaic of Our Lady Liberator in the Basilica of St. Praxedo in Rome. The child Jesus is seated on his Mother’s lap and carries a scroll on which is written: Ego sum lux, I am the light. On the back of the image, the ordinand has written three sentences that reveal his spiriniality very well.

“Non nisi te, Domine. “This is the beautiful answer of St. Thomas Aquinas.1 Our Lord Jesus Christ asked him: “You have written well of me, Thomas. What reward do you desire? “The holy Dominican answered, “None other than you. Lord. “

Then comes a little phrase from the Gospel: “jesum cum Maria, Maîrt eius. “(Mt 2:11) The Dominican, like the Three Wise Men, follows the star of the revealed truth which leads him to the house of Bethlehem. There he met “Jesus with Mary his mother” and adored him.

Priest of Jesus Christ

Finally, the young priest wanted to signify the very nature of the Dominican ministry: “This is how we have come to know the love of God, in that he gave his life for us. And we ourselves must give our lives for our brothers. “(1 Jn 3:16) He already saw preaching and the ministry of confession or spiritual direction as a work of redemption, an immolation, a sacrifice for souls.

At the present time, the young priest had no idea of the paths on which Holy Providence was going to lead him. Nevertheless, one small detail of the organization of this holy day had a prophetic aspect. When it came to the meal which was to follow the ordination ceremony and in which the Calmel family would take part, Father Lauzière, prior of Saint-Maximin, had spontaneously said: “There are the sisters,” quite simply. Not far from the chapel of the nuns of Saint Maur was the school of the Dominican Sisters of the Holy Name of Jesus, at 48 avenue du Maréchal-Foch, in Toulon. We could ask the sisters for this charity. This thought of the prior reveals the fraternal friendship that united the teaching sisters to the Dominican fathers of the province of Toulouse. The prioress, Mother Hélène Jamet, willingly

accepted to render this service to the young ordained. The day before the ceremony, the ordinand spent the whole day in prayer in the small chapel of the Dominican sisters. Then we met again after the ordination. Mother Hélène could not imagine, of course, the supernatural bonds that would unite their souls in the near future, nor the role that the new priest would have to play in her congregation, from 1949 until his death in St. Pierre in 1975.

First steps in the apostolic life

After his ordination, the young priest returned to his beloved convent. Then in November of the same year, he had to leave Saint-Maximin to go to Toulouse, to the convent on rue Espinasse where he remained until December 1945.

The change of scenery was not total! The former seminarian was back in the bustling city he had left only five years earlier. Moreover, he found in the convent of Toulouse the regular observances of the Order and the life of study that he cherished. Priestly ordination, in fact, did not put an end to the Dominican's theological work. On the contrary, it gave him a new impetus. The good principles acquired in the privileged setting of the convent of study, linked to the new maturity of the young priest, give him a new penetration of the great mysteries of the faith. On the other hand, the Dominican constitutions provide for special studies for new priests and prescribe

even examinations. The young preacher is thus introduced gradually but surely into his specific ministry, while maintaining an intense intellectual life.

But more than science, it was Father Calmel’s spiritual life that took off. For if the sacramental life, and especially the Eucharistic communion, gives the soul to grow in union with God, how much more does this become true through priestly ordination. This last one gives the priest to participate in the priesthood of the High Priest, it establishes him instrument of Our Lord, minister of the Holy Spirit. What digs in his soul an ardent need of union to God and of contemplation;

The priest, more than any other, stands, by virtue of his very office, at the living springs of contemplation, (…) he is taken into the hands of Jesus Christ to offer under an effective sign the sacrifice of the new testament… (…) It is there that his soul receives more intensely the graces of love, of zeal, of contemplation. (…) How can Christ, in fact, in the sacrosanct moments when he offers to the Father through the priest of the Church, not make the streams of charity which burn in his own heart overflow into the heart of this priest?

Now, in this ascent to the heights of union with God, the ministry of preaching itself plays a great role. Far from being, for the Dominican, an obstacle to sanctification, it is on the contrary an integral part of it. The loving contemplation of the truth must be broad enough to carry with it the souls to be saved. It is reflected not only in liturgical worship but also in preaching.

It was this that attracted Father Calmel to the Order of Preachers. U wrote in 1953 what had made him admire St. Dominic: “I love our father because he had a passion for evangelical doctrine and because he founded an Order to bring it to men. And this is in keeping with his priesthood. His zeal for souls is admirably complete and balanced. Not only a testimony of poverty by detachment from the earth and by offering to the Love that is not loved, like St. Francis of Assisi, but with that at the same time.

Cria. 1972-1975, DMM.cton de iw,p. 245). “The sacred communion has for tînaliit

the feeling that man - whatever he does - cannot do without ideas and doctrine, that in order to save men and draw them to the holy Church, example, however indispensable, will not suffice. Jesus said:

“Go, teach all nations, instruct them,” St. Dominic, in this respect, is the living image of the Apostles and the doctor of the Gentiles. Pugiles fidei et vera mundi lumina

Compassion for souls

Very early on, Father Calmel received the grace to understand in depth the heart of Saint Dominic. In the latter he saw not only the contemplative who shared with those around him the riches of his contemplation, according to the very accurate expression of Saint Thomas Aquinas: contemplari et contempUta aliis tradere. He penetrated more deeply into the soul of his father Dominic, he went to the source of his preaching, he defined him as a champion of mercy. It is not enough to contemplate the truth, in fact, to

have the duty and the taste to preach it. Something more is needed. In this primary truth itself, one must see love, and in this love, one must see mercy, one must recognize and share the compassion of God for souls. Dominican spirituality is not binary (contemplate - preach), it is trinary (contemplate - sympathize - preach). Just as the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son, compassion for souls proceeds from contemplation (as from a father) and from preaching (as from the son of this father). It is this compassion that drives the preaching brother into the desert of prayer and penance and into the field of preaching. It is the famous “What will become of the poor sinners” of Saint Dominic.

This understanding that Father Calmel acquired of the soul of St. Dominic already appears in the text of 1953 already quoted:

The patriarch of our Order, the first of the friars preachers, St. Dominic, was in the highest degree a man of prayer, a priest of God who overflowed with prayer.

Why this intensity of supplication and contemplation? Because this truly apostolic man had an exceptional love for Jesus Christ, a sense of the distress of the Church in the 13th century, a sense of the price of souls and the danger of eternal damnation to which the plague of heresy exposed them. Quidfient peccatores.

heretic.

As he had felt very deeply in his assiduous prayer the urgent necessity for the Church of holy preaching, God not only

gave him the grace to found an order of preachers, but an order of mendicant clerics dedicated to preaching. And this Order, during St. Dominic's lifetime, was to spread as the light spreads in the night of the Easter vigil, at that moment of the Exsullel when the candles are passed from one to the other. O lumen Ealesiae.

Certainly, the restrictions of the war and the occupation prevented large-scale travel. However, Father Calmel was able to do some ordinary preaching in parishes and schools, and to accompany pilgrimages to Lourdes. In 1942, he was sent to Montgiscard, in the Haute-Garonne, to preach Lent. In 1943, he was sent to Saint-Gilles du Gard, then to Ercé in the Ariège in 1944, and to Brignoles in 1945.

Proarisetfocis

The ministry of preaching had a very beneficial effect on the young Father Calmel, that of a certain opening to the world. Until now, he had lived in a privileged and relatively preserved environment: the hillsides of Gagnol and the village of Sauveierre-la-Lémance, the minor seminary of BonEncontre in Agen, the Pius XI seminary in Toulouse, the study convent of Saint-Maximin. From then on, he came into contact with men and women of very varied conditions, intellectual and spiritual lives. This made him more aware of the difficulties that the Catholics around him were facing, how the growth of their faith was dependent on the social and political order, and how much spiritual life and equilibrium benefited from developing within a framework faithful to the natural order.

Moreover, the political and social life in France was already opening the eyes of those who were willing to see. In Toulouse, towards the end of the war, one often heard of assassinations in the mes, in the entrance halls of the

houses. One morning, for example, shots rang out in the great Nazareth street. From the window of the Bertrand boarding house, a young man armed with a machine gun ran away: a murder had just taken place on the sidewalk. A venerable canon of the cathedral who had just celebrated mass was lying on the ground, shot at point-blank range by a communist of the “Maquis rouge”. At the end of August and the beginning of September 1944, every

At the end of August and the beginning of September 1944, every evening there were chases in the alleys and on the rooftops. Shots were fired. Everyone hid in anguish for these Frenchmen who were being hunted down and shot by other Frenchmen.

Nevertheless, it was above all the ministry that helped the young religious to understand the evils of his time. He himself would later confess how his first years of preaching taught him a great deal and how it launched him into a deep study of the political doctrine of the Church:

At the beginning of my apostolic ministry, when I began to preach the Gospel to Christians who had a family and a profession, social hell, it was then that I understood the importance and the role, for the salvation of souls, or for their numbness and death, of the things of public life; it was then that I was led to ask myself if there was a sure doctrine in these matters, and I discovered, with immense joy, the social and political teaching of the sovereign pontiffs

This new thinking started from an observation;

When I walk up the streets of a big city in the early morning, there is a sight that I have never been able to get used to and that grips my heart: the display, from the very first hours of the day, of customs and habits that are profoundly opposed to life in Christ.

Those children who are waiting at the door of the school or college, you know that, except in exceptional cases, during the six or eight hours of class, they will be talked to about everything as if God did not exist and as if he had not given us his Son.

The bookstore whose employee lifts the curtain, you notice that its display is composed mostly of stupid or vile books.

In the factories that are reopening, you can see from the signs that the spirit of the workshop of Nazareth has not penetrated these places of labor and pain.

One recognizes here the glance of the peasant. This land of social life is decidedly too rocky and too dry, it will never give anything good. It is not made to receive such seed. Nevertheless, Father Calmcl now looked at the world as a priest and as a Dominican. As such, his heart was moved at the sight of the living conditions of Christians. What anguish, indeed, grips the heart of the priest who sees his brothers

What anguish, indeed, grips the heart of the priest who sees his brothers moving around in all these “things organized to make them live like apostates”. Of course, grace is all-powerful and can flourish everywhere, but “it remains that the obstacles to the life of grace that come from the

environment and from social pressure are particularly formidable and that the Lord did not want this scandal. Woe to the world for its scandals. “

The young priest encountered in everyday life the great problems on which he had meditated during his years of study, that of the relationship between nature and grace, and that of matter and form. Sanctifying grace being defined by theology as “a certain quality”, it stands in the soul as a form (accidental) in matter to which it communicates new life. It is one with the subject it perfects. This is why the spiritual life, which moves in the sphere of grace, cannot last and blossom if it is not carried by a way of life which is adapted to it. The realities which are part of the natural virtues, and from which no one can escape, must be measured, ordered, embellished, adjusted to allow the life of faith to take root and bear fruit. The famous parable of the sower who sows the seed on the stone, on the path, in the brambles or on the good soil applies not only to the interior dispositions of each person, but also to the conditions of life.

It is in this respect, above all, that the social and political realities were of such importance for the priest of Jesus Christ. He would certainly have to fight for the altars, that of the souls and that of the churches, but also for the homes, for Christianity.

6

The Convent of Saint-Lazare in Marseilles

T he social question was to take on a new acuteness for Father Calmel during the year 1946. Just after the war, the young Dominican was appointed to the convent of Saint-Lazare in Marseille, where he arrived on December 2, 1945. This community was closely involved in the delicate problem

of the Workers' Mission and the priest-workers. A former brother of the convent, Father Jacques Loew, had been placed at the disposal of the Mission of France and was working in a "team" in Marseille,

Born in 1908, the future religious was baptized Catholic but sent to the Protestant Sunday School. He lost his faith but returned to the Catholic Church at the age of 24. He joined the Dominicans and was ordained a priest two years before Father Calmel, in 1939. From 1941 to 1954, he worked as a docker in the port of Marseille. In 1947, he became the parish priest of La Cabucelle. He then became responsible for the Saint-Pierre-Saint-Paul Workers' Mission and was especially charged with the spiritual formation of the future missionaries of this group. He was appointed pastor of Port-de-Bouc in 1951. It was there that the Roman condemnations against the worker-priests of September 14, 1953 would find him.

The questions raised by the Mission of France and by the priest-workers were therefore one of the great concerns of the friar preachers of Marseilles. What was it about?

The Mission of France was founded in 1941, under the inspiration of Cardinal Suhard, Archbishop of Paris, by a group of cardinals and archbishops

1 - See Jacques Loew, Journal d'une înission ouvtière 1941-1959, Ccrf.coll. Rencontres. 1959.

of the occupied zone. The first thing they did was to found a seminary that would train priests for the dechristianized areas. The seminary of the Mission of France opened its

doors in Lisieux on October 5, 1942, with forty seminarians (including ten priests) and four professors. In September 1943, one of these “priest-seminarians”, Father Henri Godin, published his book La France, pays de mission?

The members of the seminary defined themselves as wanting to live at the rhythm of the world, sensitive to its slightest calls in order to infuse a Christian message wherever the opportunity arose. This, on our part, will require a very keen sense of the problems of the day, a passionate concern for our brothers who have become pagans, an attentive observation of contemporary life, in short, the closest possible contact with people.

In 1946, the Mission of France presented itself in a leaflet which said

A secular effort. To be in solidarity with people, to be incarnated in their lives; to be a worker with the workers, a farmer with the farmers; to share their joys, their struggles and their worries; to share their prayers; to unite contemplation and action, enlivening one by the other; to rediscover the meaning of all things and to make human life, in its totality, the path that leads to the Father. “All things are yours, and you are Christ’s, and Christ is God’s” (Lk 3:23)

After their ordination, the priests of the Mission of France would have to live in “teams” where they would try to link the life of prayer and study with involvement in the rural or working class milieu, which could only be done, it was believed in most cases, through common work.

Although different, in itself, from the experience of the worker-priests, that of the Mission of France was very close to it and participated in the same spirit.

The adventure was not lacking in generosity or audacity. Many priests and bishops were scandalized by the sight of these enormous masses of workers and peasants who remained closed to the Gospel and who seemed to be forever beyond the influence of the Church. They were ready to do anything to save them. It was necessary to launch a new m.-s-on which was said to be special and new and which.

2 . Communiqué read by Cardinal Suhard on 25 February l of Fratur. un, i,nf,/mibUumi,U. DMM, 2002.

3 ■ Guy Scriff. of. r”..p. 129.

1 Scriff. J.MrBerlu rl lu

nt Saint-Lazare de Marseille

of the rest, would require great self-denial on the part of these apostles of a new kind, having to live sometimes in extreme poverty.

Nevertheless, this initiative raised great difficulties that the haste of Cardinal Suhard had certainly not measured

The most obvious one was the choice of candidates. From the beginning, the Mission of France attracted young men or priests who had either modernist or very “left-wing” ideas. Their zeal, no doubt sincere, lacked the wisdom and the supernatural spirit of the Church. Many of them became involved in trade union activism on the side of socialists or communists. Even some worker-priests went to Moscow and made very pro-Soviet statements on their return.

An even greater difficulty concerned the nature of the Church and the episcopate. For the first time in history, a commission of cardinals and archbishops, which in itself had no jurisdiction, claimed to give a universal mission to a group of priests who were otherwise very poorly defined.

Moreover, beyond this juridical question, the apostolate that was intended to be new put at stake the very nature of the priesthood and its ministry. For the priest has been anointed with the oil of the catechumens and by the imposition of the bishop’s hands, he participates in the priesthood of Christ, he has been “taken from among men, appointed for men to worship God, to offer oblations and sacrifices for sins” (Heb 5:1). The priest is above all the man of prayer and of the Mass. And his ministry to souls consists first of all in leading them to Mass, in preparing them for it through the catechism and the sacraments. He wants to do good to men, certainly, he wants to approach them to preach the Gospel and, for this, he must make himself

to be heard by them, but this is directly oriented to active participation in the liturgy.

This eminently sacred work calls for solitude, contemplative prayer, the celebration as worthy as possible of the divine Ibflfïce, silence over the noise of the world.

Precisely, this dimension, which touches the very essence of the priesthood, seems to have been lacking in many priests of the Mission of France, who were too much inclined to conceive of their new vocation as a homogeneous extension of their Catholic Action militancy. How did the problem appear to Father Calmel in 1946?

In many ways, Father Jacques Loew resembled his young confrere. An authentic spirituality*, an ardent zeal for the salvation of souls, a great affection for the poorest, a marked and avowed taste for the theology of Saint Thomas Aquinas, and even a very clear anti-communism. For “the grassroots activist,” wrote the apostle of the dockworkers, “and the less informed priest, forget that if there are truths in Marxism, it contains a lie, and this one lie outweighs all”. Above all, Father Loew had understood very well the communist technique that recruits and educates men through the class struggle, relying on Lenin himself who states: “The class struggle will lead the Christian workers to social-democracy and atheism a hundred times better than a sermon on atheism… The class struggle that is really going on and that educates the classes more than anything else and better than anything else”.

Also, Father Loew himself opposed the priests of his who threw themselves, in solidarity with the workers, in the “struggle ouvr: the unions, “until marching at the head of the demonstration, shock and forces of order included, and picketing... ” “.

These undeniable qualities of the young Dominican did not prevent him from

fall into obvious errors, so true is it __

” , , , that our way

influences our way of thinking.

g - See, for example, his book Comme s’il mjais l’moisitle. Cerf 9 - Jacques loenjouresd d’une mission ouosière 1941-I9S0^ ‘ j’”’

W-Lenin, article “LamnidcdupailiouvrictàrcgarddcÛreii Bibl. marxiste, n’ 20. in Jacques Loew. op. dt. p. 307. ® “

The Convent of Saint Lazarus in Marseilles

In the statutes of the Saint-Pierre-Saint-Paul Mission which he wrote in 1955, Father Loew prescribed for each priest two hours of spiritual exercises per day, including Mass, recitation of the Office and prayer. This may be a lot for a factory worker, but it is still very little for a priest of Jesus Christ. Above all, the mass is seen here as an acre of personal piety. And this is the only mention of it in the text of the statutes. Now the Mass is the center and summit of the Christian life, both personal and public. It is towards it, especially the Sunday Mass, that all the apostle’s efforts should be directed. This applies to the poor as well as to the rich. Perhaps even more so, if one may say so, for the poorest. For the beauties of the liturgy, with its songs,

incense, statues and flowers, are the wealth and joy of the poor.

On the other hand, despite his protests, Father Loew did not completely avoid the trap of class struggle. He considers the working class as a nation, like the pagan continents that the missionaries set out to evangelize. In order to be heard by the workers, it was necessary to become “naturalized workers”, to live their lives and to espouse their demands, in order to be able to form with them “a local church”. It was to introduce into the Church this distinction of classes, as if there were a Church of the workers, one of the notaries and another of the farmers. In his Statutes, he defines the purpose of the Mission as follows: “To make of those whom the word has reached a Church, a community united by the bond of grace and of the human fraternity which results from it. “If the Christian community is not exclusively “bourgeois”, it is not “working class” either. To make a working-class parish reduces the catholicity of the Church. Let us remember the remarkable Letter of St. Paul to Philemon and the first Christian community in Transtevere, Rome, which united slaves and nobles under the leadership of St. Peter.

Father Calmel expressed his judgment on the Mission of France a few years later, on the occasion of Father Labourdette’s book, Le sacerdoce et la mission ouvrière, from 1959 ‘ He fraternally quotes Father Loew whose theological zeal he appreciates:

Thus, at the risk of making some people smile, the theology that proved to be the best adapted and the most new was

that of Saint Thomas and his disciples up to the present day, a Father Garrigou-Lagrange, a Bishop Journet, Gilson or Maritain. It was not, of course, prefabricated recipes, in powders and sachets, that I found there, but these great luminous glances illuminating under the true angle the problems of our time, untying the knots in which so many Christians and priests were confused and tied themselves up

However, Father Calmel made the necessary reservations against the spirit and the method of the Mission of France.

The very expression "Workers' Mission" is ambiguous and very dangerous, *i.e.* one cannot identify, as the priests of the Mission of France do, the "working class" and the continents not yet Christianized which the Catholic missionaries leave to evangelize. Such confusion would lead to the formation of a parallel Church, a Church of the workers. Now, what is the apostolate to the baptized or to the citizens of an ancient Christianity, if it is not to "bring them back to the faith by attachment to a Church already planted, let us say to a parish and a diocese already existing" (p. 48)?

Perhaps work needs to be done to make parishes more receptive to newcomers. But how are we going to reach and bring back the prodigal children of the working class? A theological reflection would have avoided many missteps.

If we had analyzed more closely the nature of the priesthood and its proper ministry, we would have found again the priestly ideal expressed by St. Peter: "And we shall be wholly devoted to the prayer and ministry of the Word" (Acts 6:4). "(Acts 6:4) The priest is a consecrated man, and he cannot have the same kind of life or the same kind of apostolate as the laity. And this must be seen. "His kind of life must make the nature of his powers visible. "(p. 50) This is not at all a contempt for manual work, for many priests have worked

with their hands, the monks are a fine example, but this is only possible insofar as the work leaves the nature of the priesthood intact.

15 - Jacques Loew, op. cit. p. 370.

The Convent of Saint Lazarus in Ma

All the more so since “the priest is not alone”, and “must not believe himself to be in charge of all forms of witness”. A better consideration of the doctrine of baptism and confirmation would have reminded us of the duty of all Catholics to work for the conversion of souls. And this is not only in so-called Catholic Action movements, mandated by the hierarchy, but in everyday life. And it is such Catholics, whatever their profession or background, who are the Church’s first contact with apostates and atheists. It is through the lay workers that the Church is close to the workers, it is through the peasants that she approaches the peasants and makes herself seen by them. There is in the undeniable generosity of the Mission of France, especially in the worker-priests, a misunderstanding of the nature of the priesthood and even of baptism and confirmation. Is it not a certain form of clericalism on the part of priests who take on an action that is primarily the responsibility of the laity?

In observing his confreres embark on such an apostolate and in seeing the first fruits of it in some of them, Father Calmel found confirmation of the good principle of which he had already had so much experience in his country life and in his studies: agcre sequitur esse, action follows being. And this other principle, which affirms that in the domain of action, the end (Heaven, holiness, contemplation) plays the role of form with regard to everything that contributes to the attainment of this end, is for the subject, for his way of life and for the means he uses, what the soul is for the body. The

priestly life must therefore be profoundly marked by its purpose, which is essentially supernatural.

In addition, the Workers’ Mission raised the difficulty of the relationship between the Christian life and the type of life of the workers. For if it is commendable to want to preach the faith to these working masses who had drifted away from it and to remedy the effects, should we not at the same time work on the cause? There were many reasons for the loss of faith of so many workers, but one of the main ones was certainly the kind of life that the revolution imposed on them

industrial revolution of the 19th century. The workers lived in a framework which, in itself, was atheistic and contrary to any kind of interior life. Moreover, they were enrolled in syndicates, in the class war under the atheistic banner of communism or socialism.

These were the thoughts of the wisest and most prudent priests of the time. Abbé Berto wrote about this:

It seems to me that it should be better to see that these (working-class) environments as they are are not “Christianizable” and that therefore, instead of accepting them in this way, of constantly placing themselves in the hypothesis, the clergy, the young clergy, should be more invited to act on the preconditions for any profound influence of Christianity. There are too many people in the factories, too many people in the cities; the urban population, the working class population, must be reduced. Rightly or wrongly, I fear that you and your confreres are inclined to think that this is indifferent to the apostolate. My conviction is that you will always be immensely

“overwhelmed”, that you will fail to establish Christian order among the working people, whatever your personal conquests. I am also afraid that even those whom you will convert, you will not convert fully, for lack of relying enough on the reality of the mystery of the Church, for lack of keeping alive enough the concern for Tradition.

These were the great questions of politics and Christianity which were pressing on the mind of Father Calmel and which he would soon address in his writings. According to his habit, he observed, knew how to appreciate the good intentions of his confreres, admired their zeal and their abnegation, and was careful not to speak in public.

However, in Marseilles, he hardly had time to give his full measure. After having preached Lent 1946 in Marvejols, in Lozère, he had to go very quickly to Toulouse where he arrived on May 8.

18 - Abbé Berw, letter to Father du Pisqoict, March 11, 1945. in Guy ScrilF, op. cil ... p. 14.

19 - In January 1963, Father Calmel wrote to a correspondent: “You (wuvea tell your parish priest

7

Toulouse

Upon his return to the capital of Languedoc, Father Calmel was solicited by a new type of apostolate, that of the pen. Although his first book did not appear until 1952, from 1946 onwards he had to participate in the writing of several reviews: La Vie dominicaine, a bulletin for Dominican tertiaries, and then the prestigious Revue Thomiste. It will not be useless to point out that this literary apostolate represented for the Dominican only a part of his ministry,

like the top of the iceberg. Faithful to his worship of the truth and his respect for souls, Father Calmel entrusted to the public only what he had long carried in prayer and in study. He gave to the problems of his time a long meditated answer.

First lessons in spirituality

From May 1946 onwards, he collaborated with La Vie dominicaine. From his very first articles, he showed a theological depth, a delicacy of feeling and a boldness of expression that would later characterize him. They allow his reader to appreciate the height from which he descended to address souls, especially the greatest sinners. These first studies of the young Dominican can be summed up in one sentence: We must make fire of all wood. Everything must serve as fuel for the fire of charity, everything can and must help the soul's journey towards God, to its union with God: past sins, crosses and scales, weaknesses of temperament.

This series of articles opens with a contemplation of St. Mary Magdalene. She presents the model of a penitence that is open to the light. Far from withdrawing into herself, the saint stands at the feet of the

Savior (Le 7): "Without discouragement and straightforwardly, she gives what she couldiii give, the perfume and all the previous life it represented - all the balm of terrestrial delights™. "For for the sister of Marrhe,

To pour perfume is a sign too external, and too slow for her love. Even before she can do it, it is her soul that spills out

with her tears, all the false loves she had kept in them come to spill out in this painful effusion.

From then on, all her old love having been emptied and poured out in her sobs, “a new love rises, silent and divine. How can she be condemned?” Following her, the converted sinner must give himself up to love, giving to God what he has most intimate:

It’s all his life and his past idolatry, it’s all that pitiful “mixture of intoxication, distress and sin” that one held compressed in oneself and that it’s a question of not keeping anymore, of letting it flow, or rather of giving it away.

True penitence makes you stand up and be bold.

This becomes clearer through a comparison. In a later issue of Dominican Life, Father Calmel compares St. Mary Magdalene (Le 7) to the adulterous woman (Jn 8). Jesus, who does not even look at the adulteress, shows us that contrition is much more than “the feeling of having fallen below oneself, below the human ideal, below the code of humanity formulated by the city and the law. For there is much more than the law, there is “grace and truth” brought by Jesus Christ. Contrition does not come from wounded honor. It comes from the love that the poor woman still lacks. To the repentant Mary Magdalene, Jesus said, “Go in peace, your faith has saved you. “He made no reference to her past sin. To the adulteress, on the other hand, he said, “From now on, sin no more. Father Calmel explains that this was probably because she was not yet living sufficiently according to the law of love.

It was a clear warning to timid souls who, after their confession, remain in the dark memory of their misery, do

not believe themselves totally forgiven, do not dare to really love and make their life a gift of gratitude.

On the occasion of the feast of the Transfiguration, in August-September 1946, Father Calmel remembered especially the hidden life of Our Lord;

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“God had to manifest himself to man in obscurity and humility” in order to incline “humble and repentant hearts to give themselves to him”. In this way, he addresses more effectively the “eyes of the heart that see the light”.

After past sin, it is the sorrows and failures of life that interest Father Calmel. They too must serve as fuel for charity. In an article on the sign of the Cross, the Dominican shows it not only as an act of faith in the Holy Trinity or as the sign of redemption that introduces us into the life of God, but he goes further, he invites his reader to follow his gaze:

When I make the sign of the Cross, I take all my crosses in my hand, (…) I unite them to the Cross of Christ, which alone gives life, and I consecrate them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

From then on, it is the whole of life, with its labors and its sorrows, which unfolds before God, which is exposed to God’s gaze. This will be one of the constants of Father Calmel’s spiritual direction;

All my crosses, even the most unexpected or the most ignominious, or those which are the banal and unglamorous consequence of my foolishness, of my sins, of my original constitution, all of them I apply to myself voluntarily, I make an act of faith, confessing them to the Trinity, affirming that

they are not unworthy of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, because from now on they are united and joined to the very Cross of Christ. (…) We believe that they must be welcomed, gathered and offered in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

All the trials of life are thus involved, carried away, in this great fire of love which burns on the Cross.

Another “wood” can and must be used for the fire of God’s love, that of our fragility, that of our psychological weaknesses. That is why Father Calmel, in his article in the February 1947 issue of the same magazine, presents Our Lord in his relationship with the poor men that we are. This study reveals the deep understanding and respect for souls that inhabited the Dominican. It is the heart of Christ and the heart of the priest that shines through in these lines:

- He knew what is in man (…)

- He knew the way in which man knows sin. (…)

- He knew that the presence of his Church would not abolish sin. (…)

- But he, full of grace and truth and who enlightens every man coming into this world, knew that the Father wants to draw every man whatever he may be.

That is why he accepted, why he begged for the love of his brothers, even the most fallen. (…)

- he knew how implacable one must be if one wants a person who spontaneously acclimates himself to the comforts of the earth to enjoy the happiness of God, (...) so that he may acquire a taste for the things of God. (But it is always) as a gentle and humble master that he will give them his lessons. (...)

- He knew that excellence of any kind usually leads to separation from men, contempt, oppression, and, in the inferior, covetousness and envy. That is why he tirelessly turns the hearts of those who have any kind of superiority towards the little ones and the poor, and he asks everyone to have a detached heart. (...)

- He knew what infirmity and illness meant in terms of pain, humiliation and perhaps monstrous degradation. But he also knew that man is eager for health and equilibrium rather to be at ease on earth than to recognize in truth God who heals him. That is why, if his hands and words poured out the miracle abundantly and with such compassion and discretion, (...) he always demanded faith. (...) Moreover, he never presented his kingdom as a restoration of Edenic bliss. (...)

- He knows what our life is made of, our daily labors, our humble and great joys. (...)

- He knew how far from God every man is. (...)

- He knew (...) what is the most insurmountable shame that can crush the destiny of a man and a woman. (...)

- Now, knowing this, he brings every man or woman of good will into the peace and kingdom of God, and this in such an elevation that morality changes its meaning; it is not suppressed, but it exists only as a descendant of the divine union. (...) It happens that men who speak to us of God and

who know God, are partially unaware of what it means to be a man or to be a woman. (…) But Christ, the Son of man born of the Virgin, knew everything about man, about every man: and knowing this, he calls them all to himself. So much humanity will perhaps persuade us to cling to him

This is even more apparent in the article of March-April 1947 in which Father Calmel deals with the delicate question of the role of the character of each person in the spiritual life. Already the great director of souls who will soon manifest himself appears. In the end, it doesn't matter whether one is strong or weak, love is all-encompassing:

A weak soul is necessarily inhabited by misery. Where the strong is on the level, the weak is hesitant and trembles with fear. Where the strong one gets angry and forgets, the weak one dares not say anything, but keeps on swallowing his anger; where the strong one is free and moves with ease, the weak one is monopolized, totally occupied, he does not eliminate, he is not available for anything else. Finally, because the weak feels crumbling and uncertain, he tries to give himself courage by dreams of vanity and pride. He is instinctively jealous of those in whom he guesses adaptation and therefore luck.

But these resentments, these fears, these torturing preoccupations with petty concerns, this vanity, this jealousy, what are they really? More psychological misery than sin. One should not adorn with a moral name a reality which, fundamentally, is psychological. It is misery in the essential sense of the term: that is to say, something fatal and pitiful.

And the assurance, the generosity, the availability of the fort, what are they?

Not virtue, but luck; they have the chance to be so.

Before God, in front of his mercy and love, are there still strong and weak?

Unfortunately, each psychological state gives rise to characteristic faults:

The fault of the weak is not misery, but the absence of faith and love in this misery; the refusal to offer this misery out of weariness and discouragement, that is, out of pride. (…)

What God asks of the weak (…) is above all to accept himself as he is, not to attach importance to himself, to agree to be just that and not to believe himself a martyr, not to dramatize. What the weak would like and perhaps asks for in his prayers, what he aspires to with vehemence, is equilibrium, self-possession, freedom, inner ease; what God asks him to want is the kingdom of God.

Certainly, the sins of the weak are often difficult to distinguish from psychological weakness itself. But sin is there, in this character, like the soul in the body, like form is united to matter. The “virus

of sin”, “Tâme du péché du feibic” are well there. They consist in rebelling against the limits imposed by God and by events. For the weak as well as for the strong, the soul of sin consists in turning away from God, in refusing the light, in not exposing to God’s gaze this weakness or this strength.Nature exists (…); what is important is not to confuse nature (whether strong or weak) with grace; it is to give prayer, sadness, desire, the right object; it is that the point of application of our effort and desire is faith, love, humility and not the miracle. God asks for our works, but

above all he asks that our works be interior. Sin is not misery, but the refusal of the heart, the withdrawal before the light, whether in strength or in weakness. Grace does not have to work miracles, but to dispose us to let God enter our nature, whatever it may be.

Here, for the first time, we find the Dominican's words, which he himself has lived since the age of seventeen; the source of our actions is the "heart", the center of the soul where man stands alone before God. The source of our activities is the "heart", the center of the soul where man stands alone before God. It is there, in the depths of the soul, that our sanctification and the true Christian pedagogy are played out.

Father Calmel returned to the same subject, the same year, in La Vie dom nicaine. This time it was a review of Father Ch.-D. Boulogn's book Le moi retrouvé. His commentary opens with a long quotation from Thibon, which underlines the note of hope that emerges from the book.

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This leads to dividing the person, to excluding the concrete nature of each one from the work of sanctification, while the divine fire, the Holy Spirit, wants to set fire to the concrete man, with and in his infirmities.

On several occasions, Father Calmel will return to this subject in his writings, but already, his first articles in Z,/r Vie dominicaine show the main lines of his spiritual life: the uprightness and confidence of a repentant blade, the eyes of the heart that live from the invisible, the union with Christ in the sufferings of life, the presentation to God of our smallnesses and our struggles in an atmosphere of faith and love. In short, the profound unity that God wants to achieve

in each baptized person between grace and nature, charity and virtues, unified like fire to the wood it consumes, like the soul to the body it animates.

After five years of priesthood, the young Dominican was already in possession of the great principles that would soon govern the direction he would give to souls,

The Thomist Review

At the beginning of 1946, Father Calmel began his collaboration with the Revue Thomiste.

In order to do this, he had to ask the Holy Office for authorization "to read and possess, as far as necessary, prohibited books, for the time of his office, as editor of the Revue Thomiste". 11 received notification of this in a letter dated May 16, 1947.

Father Calmel explained to the readers of La Vie dominicaine this "narrowly specialized and rigorously scientific" review which he saw as "one of the major activities of the province of Toulouse".

Certainly, not everyone is required to do theology. However, "faith cannot remain inactive; in all, it must bear fruit in spiritual life; in some, in theological knowledge; and of course, even and especially in the latter, the primacy of the spiritual life is maintained. Moreover, in this work, the theologian needs a master. Now "the popes have said over and over again that a master did indeed exist, that St. Thomas had been given to

of the regime of grace. "On this occasion, he was saddened by the fact that Maritain and Father Laboiirdctte had made "a claim for Freud", with R. Dalbiez. Dalbiez.Dof/rf

“ee/wrer/Wede/,t/rryr/ww.(/“e(interview in Corignac. April 1970).

“Regard vénerateur et regard inhumain”, La Pensée catholique n” 17,1951, p. 92-96.

the Church until the end of the centuries, in view of the theological work”. This is why the program of the Revue Thomiste holds in two points: ” Theology conceived as a vital requirement of faith: acceptance, in the study and theological research, of the principles of Saint Thomas held both as definitive and as likely to favor all true progress. “

For sure, “these positions go against the tendencies of many minds”. Didn’t Father Calmel himself hear a preacher say: “Between the Gospel and theology, there is an abyss”? To which he replied, “On the contrary, the Revue Thomiste would say; “There is only a difference in level and it is the same stream that cascades, a source in the Gospel and a river in theology.” “

Another preacher had also affirmed from the pulpit: “The present theologian will be a Thomist by making, for his time, an effort of thought analogous to that which Saint Thomas made for his own”. To avoid the ambiguity of the term “analogous”, Father Calmel added: “The Thomist Review would add; “Certainly, but on the condition of being docile to his principles which are valid for our time as they were valid for his.” And this addition changes everything. “

First lessons on art

Calmel made his first appearance in the Revue Thomiste with an article entitled “Poésie et vie de prière”, in len” 1-2 of 1946 (p. 330-349). 11 returned on the same subject in the following number (n° 3-4, p. 623-627), by a review of the book of Jean Darbellay, Le poète et la connaissance poétique.

One can imagine the seriousness with which the young priest envisaged his new ministry by the work he provides. For this article alone, he relies on Maritain, Paul Valéry, Baudelaire, Ernest Hello, Paul Claudel, Charles du Bos, Max Jacob, Gustave Thibon, Gertrude von Le Fort (some passages). 11 compares Villon and Baudelaire, quotes Bérénice and Phèdre (Racine). On the other hand, he shows a deep understanding of Saint Thomas Aquinas, especially in his conception of human knowledge. As the title suggests, it is Father Calmel’s main preoccupation, that of the union between nature and grace, between matter and form, between body and soul, that pushes him into the difficult terrain of the philosophy of art.

If the Gospel is distinct from culture, it is not foreign to it, it must penetrate it because grace must penetrate nature; the impregnation of nature by grace will necessarily extend to culture, since the

culture is a normal extension of nature and even an inevitable extension, in the sense that the man or the people who refuse to grow in a properly human line does not remain at the stage of a formless nature, but degrades and deforms nature into inhuman aberrations (p. 330).

The union of nature and grace is, however, realized in the work of art in a very special way. Because the artistic

thought, which follows a “knowledge of afFcctive connaturality”, and thus puts strongly in play the sensitive perception, the heart and the imagination of the artist, is of a special type. “If emotion is at the origin of poetry, what constitutes it is a work of practical intelligence. “

The artist is thus quite other thing than a moralist. Certainly, his morals and his psychology enter in line in his intuition and in his work, but as a means or material cause; ” The poetry is beyond the theme, the images, the conceptions (moral) and the characters; it is one with them but exceeds them and transfigures them ” (p. 336). One will thus not judge in the same way a work of art and a treatise of morals:

The work of the moralist is imperfect if it ignores the supernatural end, grace and sin. But it does seem that there can be a perfect work of poetry, not one that directly rejects grace, but one that does not expressly involve it (p. 337).

To what extent then can a relieved work be “imbued” with grace and the supernatural world? It will be if the writer is pure and elevated enough not to present this absence of God and evil in their seductive and disturbing light, and insofar as his work retains “the beauty of a yearning for redemption or the solicitation of God through evil, or the immaculate light and innocent permission of God that bathes all evil” (p. 338). Then, “what is unhealthy is recreated in such a light that one perceives there a certain call, even if informal, to what is healthy and normal” (p. 339). Moreover, the author is mainly interested here in the link between poetry and prayer (or theology). These two acts move of course in different orders, although both make enter the man in himself and lead him to the silence. “The more theology scrutinizes the revealed fact, the more it understands that it is necessary to be silent and to love” (…) “Poetry leads to silence because of the rapture without

speech which is the characteristic of the perception of the beautiful. “We can guess then how contemplative faith and poetic art can help each other. “Saint Augustine crying in the song of the psalms offers a

imperishable example of this comfort that the ecstasy of prayer and the poetic ecstasy lend themselves. ” (p. 344)

Poetry, however, is dangerous for the life of prayer, because of the primary role it gives to the senses and the imagination. On the other hand, “it is because it gives such a large part to the senses and to the sensitive faculties, in order to harmonize them with the spirit, that religious poetry, in the total sense of the word: psalms, song, liturgical dramatization, will be for most men, not very apt for pure abstraction, a better way for contemplation than theology alone” (p. 345).

There remains the danger of making of the beautiful an idol, of identifying it with God and of devoting the same worship to him. Poetry will have then the very harmful effect to put to sleep the soul “by transposing its aspirations and its supernatural requirements in the order of the fiction. (…) The conversion with the fiction holds place of pure and simple conversion; it faints in the beauty instead of losing itself in God. “

At the end of this article, Father Calmel apologizes for the imprecision of his method; “He made us understand the inconvenience of the back and forth of our thought between two points of view that it would have been better to study separately”, that of the poet and that of the reader. In fact the style of this study lets appear too much the tension of a

thought which is searching, of a synthesis not matured enough between the various sources consulted and which remains too far, it seems to us, from the authority of a master that would have been saith Thomas Aquinas, The author appears there more like a mystic and a director of souls than like a professor. U is mystical in the measure that he tries to harmonize two experiences, that of the union with God in the sanemary of the soul and that of the poet who stands “in these regions of the poetic plenitude of the depths of the soul, all close to those where God wants to take his rest in us” (p, 344). 11 is director of souls, those of the public as well as those of the artists, because he constantly seeks to lead them to the silence of the supernatural contemplation.

Nevertheless, it is the proof of a great spirit and a very Dominican audacity to take on such a difficult question and to advance thought on a terrain that is still so little cleared. Father Calmel shows himself to be a researcher of great scope who sheds light on these subjects which concern so closely the life of men and of societies.

He will do it again in the special number l-2dc 1948 of theAcwec ThomisU entirely devoted to the work of Jacques Maritain This time, it is about

for Father Calmel to present Maritain’s philosophy of art and to draw out the two main axes which he defines as a “serene fidelity to eternal essences and a fraternal presence to the miseries and promises of our time” (p. 123).

The author shows first of all the fruitfulness of the scholastic method which defines the art (the fine arts) from the arts.

Consequently, “art is in the line of the making, not in that of the knowing. Consequently, it will have to guard against usurping the role of the abstract knowledge, the speech and the teaching” (p. 124). Of this fact, the art being “the right determination of the works to make”, it is “in the practical reason: neither the manual skill, nor the imaginative exuberance constitute it in its bottom; the mechanization and the debauchery are equally inadmissible” (p. 124).

Then comes the definition of the beautiful, which is “the brightness of the form”, a state of the matter which lets appear and shine the form, the ontological richness of the thing Maritain explains very precisely the famous sentence of the ancients; Ars imitatur naturam, which does not mean in any way an imitation in the manner of a conformed copy;

If the joy of the beautiful work comes from some truth, it does not come from the truth of the imitation as reproduction of things, it comes from the perfection with which the work expresses or manifests the form, in the metaphysical sense of this word, it comes from the truth of the imitation as manifestation of the form. Here is the formal of the imitation of art; the expression or the manifestation, in a work suitably proportioned, of some secret principle of intelligibility which shines

Besides, the arc is the fact of an artist who is inserted in an order of ends independent of him. This is why “the gratuity is a deviation” (p. 129). In his own spurt, in his know-how, the artist enjoys a certain autonomy. But he aims only at a partial end, which holds itself to the service of a superior end. The creation is thus a little like an instrument with regard to the ultimate end.

Jacques Maritain’s message to artists can be summarized as follows:

Understand what your creation is. (...)

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Do not try to tear your art from the human, intelligible and discursive soil, which it needs to live. It is the sap rather than the soil that forms the fruit; but if, in view of the purity of the sap, you try to transplant the tree in a vacuum, you exhaust it and sterilize the fruit. Understand also that the gift of creation is not everything, is not even the best in you: what price is talent or genius compared to faithfulness to God?

If you become like a little child again, if your soul takes its pleasure in God and plays before him in all seasons, your invention, your grace and your poetic genius will know how to play on the face of the earth and the waters with a radiant freedom.

One recognizes here the two great axes of the thought of the disciple of Saint Thomas: that of the union between matter and form, which is the great metaphysical problem which is posed to any artist, and that of the need, for any man and here for the artist, to live under the glance of God.

Father Calmel concluded his work on art in the Revue Thomiste with a double review in the autumn 1953 issue, entitled “L’Église et l’art” (p. 637-643).

In the service of truth and charity

Another aspect of the apostolate through the press is of particular interest to the Brother Preacher, that of the defense of theological purity. By the nature of things, polemics holds a great place in a doctrinal review, and the

temptation is strong to let oneself be carried away by the ardor of the debates and to hurt the virtues of justice and charity. Now, if he was outspoken and if he was not exempt from mood swings and consequently from expressions that went beyond his thoughts, Father Calmel was very careful to maintain the greatest delicacy with regard to his opponents. There was nothing in him of a universal righter of wrongs, of a “roquet” barking at everything that passed by

U expressed himself on this subject in an article in the review La Vie dominicaine, July-August 1947. The opportunity was offered to him by the review of a pamphlet published by some Dominicans (Fathers Labourdette, M.-J., Nicolas, Bruckberger) in response to a criticism of an issue of the Revue Thomiste

26 - In 1954, in the Revue Thomiste, he wrote a review of La vérité chez Pascal by the future Cardinal Charles Journet (p. 204-205).

(May-August 1946) made by a group of Jesuits (Fathers de Lubac, Daniélou, von Balthasar, etc.) in the Recherches de science religieuse.

What should we choose, between charity and truth? Should we sacrifice the rights of truth by maintaining a myopic irenicism, or should we affirm the truth strongly, even if it means offending sensitivities and gentle charity?

As we will often see later on, Father Calmel refuses this false simplistic problem and seeks the higher Christian balance. On the one hand, he underlines and praises the peaceful tone of the response of the Dominican fathers which “by its serenity and its grandeur honors the truth”. On the other hand, he is opposed to the histoticism praised by his

opponents, which delivers faith to the vicissitudes of “feeling and desire”. The authors of the Revue Thomiste are therefore doing a work of both truth and charity by defending the speculative objectivity of theology “which measures us and transcends us, which is permanent and which does not turn with the turmoil of History; all our effort will be to submit to it, to help men to welcome it in its integrity instead of arranging it to suit men”. This is the best service to offer our contemporaries, because “charity lives only by the truth”.

On the subject of the method of theology and the Holy Scriptures, he will compose, in March 1948, a Letter to a lecturer on the direct reading of the first chapters of Genesis^’.

Moreover, while devoting himself to the literary apostolate, Father Calmel did not neglect the ministry of the word. As early as 1947, he preached at Saint-Sever, in the Landes, and then at Salies-de-Béarn (Pyrénées-Atlantiques) for Lent in 1948. In addition, he rendered services during pilgrimages or in schools. A former student of the Brothers of the Christian Schools in Toulouse remembers that Father Calmel was talked about, quoted and loved from 1952-1954.

The Father’s apostolic travels gave him the opportunity to make detours to Sauveterre-la-Lémance and to see his dear family again. Then he could rest a little. He liked to walk around the property, his sister-in-law still remembers. He could recharge his batteries, where his vocation was born.

p. 30: The second and third chapters of Genesis.

28 - In the following years, he was found in the following places: 1949, Otthet (Hrenées-Atlantiqucs); 1950, Pèzènas (Hérault); 1951, Villeftanche-de-Rouetgue (Aveyron); 1952,

Auch (Gcis): 1953, Castelsarrasin (Tarn-et-Garonne): 1954, Flotentin-Aussae (larn); 1955, Damazan (Lot-et-Garonne): 1956, Florentin-Atissac (Tarn).

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From the first years of his priesthood, Father Calmel had a lot to do. Wouldn't such an intense apostolic life dampen the young priest's fervor? By dint of giving himself up in this way in written or oral preaching, was he not in danger of losing his taste for prayer? On the contrary, ministry to souls and experience only confirmed the preaching brother in his vocation.

The proof is in his letters and writings which show a growing maturity and an ever more intimate union with the God who had delighted his youth. In 1952, for example, echoing the quotation from St. Paul that he had placed on the back of his ordination picture, but deepened and enlivened, he wrote:

I know, Lord, that the ministry of the Word is an instrument of faith to extend your Kingdom, but what I need to know even more is that the Word is useless in a sense if it does not proceed from an immolated heart, from a soul configured to your passion and resurrection. The soul of the apostolate, what gives it its effectiveness, is the immolation of the apostle, his configuration to the Lord whom he announces.

The Dominican sky is darkening

The end of the 1940s was the scene of profound transformations in people's minds. Following the war, the innovative tendencies that had emerged around 1930 took off and won over a large part of the clergy and the faithful. Numerous magazines, the Catholic Action movements, some seminaries and religious orders were the vehicles of

demands that darkened the sky of the Church like heavy clouds in the sky of a warm summer evening.

11 It will not be useless to take a look at the state of the Dominican Order in France in the 1950s in order to understand Father Calmel's attitude towards his brothers in religion.

Suint-Maximin

The province of Toulouse always shone with its jewel of the Haut-Var, the royal convent of Saint-Maximin. An elder, who made his novitiate in 1950, will allow us to visit it. At that time, the community numbered from fifty to sixty student brothers. To these were added twelve novices who had been repatriated from Toulouse in the fall of 1946, and seven or eight lay brothers. The regular observances had been lightened because of the restrictions of the war. Liturgical life, however, retained a privileged place. On the feasts of the first class, we rose at night for matins at two o'clock in the morning. Every day, each one privately recited the little office of the Holy Virgin before going to the choir for the great office. Vespers and Compline were sung, the latter being followed, according to Dominican tradition, by the procession of the A'u/i'c with acolytes. Every day the

community attended the conventual mass at twelve o'clock, in addition to the morning mass.

The general atmosphere of the novitiate was healthy and the young brothers kept their cheerfulness. One of them, our witness recalls, could not sing Psalm 132, which compares fraternal charity to the oil that flowed from Aaron's beard

[Barbam Aaron], without going into a frank and contagious fit of laughter. 11 asked for forgiveness with the famous venia, of course, but nothing changed. He remained incorrigible. The innocent “malefactor” was proud, all the same, to have been able to make Father Philippon smile, who, it is said, never laughed.

As is only natural, the novices were separated from the other members of the community except for meals and services. However, they did not fail to be surprised at times by the animated controversies that separated the Fathers. Father Barron, for example, was very keen on defending the memory of Marshal Pétain, while Father Bruckberger argued passionately for General de Gaulle,

The prior provincial, Father Marie-Joseph Nicolas, the prior of the convent, Father Lauzière, and the master of novices, Father Rzewuski, strove to maintain the novitiate at the level that the Order and the Church expected of it. To this end, the novices were introduced to the most authentic sources of Dominican spirituality. They read St. Catherine of Siena, St. Albert the Great and the great authors of the Order (Fr. Clérissac, Fr. Lavaud, Fr. Joret). Father Vayssière was held in veneration and was read and explained. The noviciate’s courses were of pure rhomism and oriented the young friars towards an auihcntically contemplative life.

The religious discipline and the general atmosphere of the novitiate were such that the novices were not aware of the innovative movements that were already agitating the Church outside. For example, when Pope Pius XII published his famous encyclical Humani generis stigmatizing neo-modernism, the papal text was read in the refectory. It was seen as a victory for Saint Maximin and his Thomism. Jean-Hervé Nicolas as professor of theology, while at the same

time Father de Lubac was forbidden to teach. Everyone was then behind Pius XII without any difficulty.

Another witness, a theology student in 1950, recalls that there was a lot of talk about Congar, but it was to criticize him openly

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The Dominican sky is darkening

The correspondence of Father Calmcl with his brothers and fathers of the province of Toulouse confirms this impression of lucidity and elevation, both spiritual and doctrinal.

Nevertheless, the convent of Saint-Maximin had weaknesses that would have serious consequences.

The first one concerns recruitment. Father Rzewusld was appointed novice master in 1946. As soon as he arrived, he was struck by the difference between what he had known twenty years earlier and what he had before him. “It was obvious that the generation that came after the Second World War was physically and morally less robust. “This forced the superiors to soften the rigor of the observances. But the most important thing was the souls: “They lacked much of that spiritual grit which is indispensable to accept such a hard discipline, and yet so beneficial and even beatifying. “The new generation was “generally weakened by malnutrition and the hard times of the war and the occupation. I could see this both among the novices and later, when I was in charge, among the students. Many of these young people carried within them a background of anxiety and often instability. It was a curious generation that bore little resemblance to the one I had encountered during my personal years of novitiate and studentate.

In March 1950, the canonical visit of the Prior Provincial, Father Marie-Joseph Nicolas, put his finger precisely on the wound. Father Rzewuski, master of novices, held a particularly solemn chapter in which he wanted to set things straight;

Following the canonical visitation, the Father Provincial felt that the novitiate in the house was the least successful. The novitiate is a time of learning about Dominican life. Now the ideal that we should aim at is to give the truth, the word of God, the light, to the world. For this, we must get rid of impurity, injustice, *etc.* (...) We must break with the past and with the present. (...) We must break with the world, break with ourselves. Now the present novitiate suffers from two evils which are one and the same: lack of bite, lack of seriousness. This can be felt in the dissipation of the eyes and speech, and in the following points;

29 - Lcctrc of the pcrc Labourdeue to Father Calmel of January 18, 1950, in which he defends the mono or less cvolunistic polygenrsts.

a, 1976. p. 341.

- Vulgarity. For the exterior betrays the interior. We should have bodies, attitudes, words of knights as our souls should be.

- Minimalism: a lethargy, a fear, a lack of courage,

- Politics: we must give men the principles of a Christian politics and sociology; after that, let them take care of themselves.

- Dissipation; chasing everything that denotes the world: eyes, conversations, thoughts.

- Criticism and the spirit of criticism.

Unfortunately, a few weeks after this reprimand, the situation had hardly improved and the sub-master of novices had to return to the subject; “The spirit has not changed. In spite of the efforts of some, it is still the same atmosphere of carelessness and lightness which translates into an unpleasant spirit. “11 spoke of conversion, of the interior reform of each one, of the return to silence and calm.

The superiors were right to be alarmed. For soon, this lightness and these psychological weaknesses were to have disastrous consequences; “Perseverance in effort was no longer the strong point of the post-war generations, and our Order, so important in the life of the Church - and it is not, alas, an exception among the others - had to undergo bitter and painful abandonment.

A revelation by Father Rzewuski reveals a deeper wound in the core. In 1946, a candidate who was disturbing to say the least presented himself to the novitiate which was then in Toulouse. The young man in his twenties, a former student of the Jesuits, received the habit and was a “disciplined novice, a good companion to others and diligent in overcoming the difficulties inherent in our lives. But, strangely enough, from the very first weeks of his novitiate, this young friar received frequent visits from a “personage with an unusual name and evocative of the vigor of his biceps”. These talks and the correspondence that the novice kept up worried the Father Master. The latter summoned the brother and said to him: “My brother, I have nothing to reproach you for, nor to object to concerning your conduct at the novitiate, but two things intrigue me and almost make me think that you belong to

some secret organization. “Father Rzewuski was surprised when the young man confessed that he was indeed a member of the Communist Party and that the man who came to see him was an agent. Before entering, he had tried to leave the party, but

this was forbidden to him. In the convent,” she was told, “you will be more useful to us than anywhere else. “

One can only appreciate the foresight of the master of novices in this case. But the fact does not leave to be disturbing. For for one discovered communist agent, how many false vocations, revolutionary or at least innovative spirits were not allowed to pass? Without even having an explicitly subversive intention, it is indeed easy to keep, during one’s long years of ecclesiastical studies, the spirit that one brought with him when he arrived and to give it free rein when he left.

The evil was all the more real because the doctrinal formation at Saint-Maximin suffered from a great defect. While St. Thomas was studied and an intense spiritual life was nurtured, the student brothers were not sufficiently protected against modern errors. There was a willingness to engage in specialized controversies, but the danger of neo-modernist philosophy and theology was not seen. Preachers were prepared for another time, it seemed, or out of time, unable to guess and refute the enemies of truth where they were rampant. They wanted to be for the truth, but they were silent in the face of error. Thus, we saw fathers with the most erudite knowledge of Saint Thomas and Thomism soon become the most relentless modernists. Father Jean

Cardonnel, who soon became a communist militant, was a deacon at Saint-Maximin in 1950!

Father Calmel was particularly sensitive to this deviation. He would willingly talk about it, much later, in private conversations.

About the great exegete of the beginning of the century, Father Lagrange, whom he greatly esteemed for his erudition, he said:

Father Lagrange did not feel the perversity of modernism, its evil for souls. 11 did not have an acute vision of the crisis of the Church of

He was not a fighter for the faith, like St. Pius X. He was fighting for his area. He fought against error, but in his own area".

Without serving him directly, Father Lagrange did not see the gravity of the modernist errors*.

33 - Pcrc Rzcwuski, op. cit. p, 484-485.

34 - Testimony of pcrc Pcissac o.p.

In relation to his contemporaries, he said :

The weakness of Saint-Maximin's Thomism was to ignore modern errors, and then to want to join them (Father Labourdette, Father Leroy...)

Faced with Teilhard, they were weak because they were weak before modern myths. But Teilhard is a myth that

seduces, not an idea that holds.

Its evolution is a bet against faith. It is to want man in the place of God".

This deficiency was all the more prejudicial because the modernist avalanche was raging not only outside but also inside the Order. The slackening that Father Marie-Joseph Nicolas had detected in the novitiate of Saint-Maximin and that Father Rzewuski had so much difficulty in curbing was only the transposition of a general malaise in the Order.

Such lightness manifested itself first of all in the liturgical domain. Father Calmel deeply regretted the disdain of his brothers in religion for the celebration of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass and the Divine Office. They kept themselves in the sphere of pure contemplation or spoke only of efficiency and contact with the world. He would later see this neglect as one of the reasons why so many priests accepted the liturgical reforms without flinching. Moreover, this negligence was linked to a fever for novelty in some. In the liturgical field, no more than elsewhere, they did not want to lag behind the innovative current. Before the war, Father Maydieu o.p., celebrated at NotreDame for the friends of the magazine Sept, a "new style" mass, with the priest facing the people and the liturgy animated in French*. After the "Liberation", the various scout and guide camps were the crucible of the most daring liturgical innovations. And several Dominicans were among the most advanced theologians of the Liturgical Movement.

In the doctrinal field which is more his, the Dominican order in France was under the same assault as the other religious orders and the seminaries. Father Calmel tells how, "in 1942 or 1943, mimeographed and unsigned papers of Father Teilhard circulated abundantly in the seminaries, the

studentates and among the laity”. He received from a “theologian” a copy of the Jesuit’s How I believe. “I am

37 - Private interview, in Ptonilhc in October 1972.

O.p. 55.

I still remember,” he wrote, “the uneasiness that overcame me as I read those disconcerting pages. “In 1947, Teilhard’s treatise entitled Evolution of Chastity was circulating in Toulouse. “Its content shocked me”, the Dominican would later say. Certainly, his good sense and his philosophical and theological formation made him see the trap, the confusion between nature and grace. But how many allowed themselves to be contaminated little by little by these ideas that led to modernism?

This influence was all the more harmful because it was explicitly encouraged and propagated by notoriety. For the Dominican order provided some of the boldest pioneers of neo-modernism. From their creation in 1932, the Cerf editions were a rallying point for the most innovative writers. They gave birth to the progressive weekly Sept (1934) which had to disappear in August 1937 because of its Marxist tendency, but which was reborn in its successor Temps présent. In 1941, Father Boisselot, director of the Cerf publishing house, launched Fêtes et saisons.

Two characters stand out in this general movement and summarize it, so to speak, the fart Chenu and Congar.

Father Chenu

Father Chenu was the rector of the study convent of Le Saulchoir from 1932 to 1942. He formed a whole generation of Dominicans. Among his most famous disciples were Fathers Congar, Schillebeeckx, Maydieu (who directed Vie intellectuelle), Féret, Duployé (one of the founders of the Centre de Pastorale liturgique). On March 7, 1937, on the occasion of the feast of St. Thomas Aquinas, he gave a conference which had a great impact. In it he set out the principles adopted by his school and laid the foundations of the historical method which sees in the events of the world (in this case, decolonization, ecumenism, social movements) “signs of the times”, interventions of God in history, “theological places”, thus favoring an essentially evolutionary doctrine ”The oral intervention was published

41 - Father Chenu, Un théologie” en liberté. Centurion, 1975.

by the events and by the movement of Thistoirc. far from translating an irrevocable Revelation, guarded by an infallible Magisterium” (Itineraries n” 127, November 1968, p. 37 and sv. The priest and the Revolution. 1914-1968. p. 44).

a few months later under the title Une école de théologie, le Saulchoir. It was condemned by Rome and put on the Index in 1942.

Supported then by Cardinal Suhard, bishop of Paris, Father Chenu continued what he believed to be his mission". He spoke widely, wrote in reviews of "left-wing" Christians, such as Témoignage chrétien, supported numerous initiatives, and exerted a decisive influence on the Semaim Sociales de France, the Mission de France, the J.O.C., the Mouvement des familles, and the Priests-Ourrien.

The Dominican therefore saw in socialism and communism not "a competition" of the Church, but rather "the quality of a global aspiration that swells with hope the longing of men for justice, solidarity, equality, against the relationships of domination and exploitation. "

In doing so, he was well aware that he was opposing the directives of Pope Pius XII. In this one reigned, he maintained, "an ideology, or an anti-ideology", which "obturated the intelligence of the movement of the History". Father Chenu reproached the Pope for having rejected "the participation of workers in the management (the co-management of companies) which, in fact, is a constitutive operation of a socialist regime. And he was indignant that Pius XII had brought a "suspicion not only against the 'progressive Christians', seduced by the Marxist ideology that was everywhere penetrating (decree against all collaboration with the communist parties, 1949), but also

against the Christian militants who were sensitive to socialization. The suppression of the worker-priests in France (1954) shows this contraction of a sacralizing rather than evangelical Church. “For him, this was the result of a teaching that was “still numb in an individualistic numbness”,

In fact, he maintained that, in these historical transformations, the theologian has a role to play, not to condemn the uprising of the working world or the revolutions, but to encourage them, to baptize them and to be inspired by them in his thinking about the Church. With communism, “it is to a revolution

43 - When he met Cardinal Suhard just after his condemnation in 1942> Father Chenu and de Lubac spoke at the Social Weeks in Paris. Cardinal Suhard refused

44 ‘ Father Chenu, La “doctrine sociale de l’Église”, Cerf, 1979. p. 50-51- Father Chenu’s disciple and friend, Father Yves Congar said to him one day “with the accents of a neophyte: “I have become a socialist!” And he replied; “We are all there.” ” (Congar. t/“e v/for the truth, Jean Puyo interviews Father Congar, Centurion. 1975)

45 - Father Chenu, op. “/. p. 59-60.

spiritual that we are witnessing, in the midst of an economic revolution, Aristotle is still besieging Christianity”^ “.

It is up to the theologian, therefore, to do with Marx and his emulators what Saint Thomas did with the Greek philosopher. For the upheavals of our time, as Cardinal

Suhard put it in 1947, are “not the aftermath of a catastrophe, but the forerunners of a coming birth. The present malaise does not proceed from a decadence of the world, nor even from a disease: it is a crisis of growth”. “We are witnessing one of the “great hours of humanity” in which a “historical energy is renewing the world”. To the Christians to add “this extra soul that of such socialization will make a ground of freedom ■-””. In the end, the most unnatural and atheistic political regimes could be married to the life of faith and charity of the Gospel!

Father Chenu thus attacked the great principles of realist philosophy and traditional theology: the stability of truth, the relationship between nature and grace, the relationship between Church and State, Christian politics, the meaning of history transformed into an inescapable messianism, the very nature of theology and its submission to the magisterium. Moreover, he linked practice to theory by supporting all the revolts of his time “*’. It was at this school that generations of preaching friars were trained.

LtpèreCongar

The most representative of Father Chenu’s disciples at that time is without a doubt Father Congar.

He entered the minor seminary of Rheims in October 1919. He entered the Carmelite seminary and attended the Catholic Institute of Paris. He gives a very significant description of this time:

Catholicism, and particularly the Catholic Institute, lived inwardly. (…) Christian philosophers of that time, men like Blondel. Laberthonnière, Maréchal were ignored, if not despised. And what can be said of philosophers who were foreign to the thought

47-Cardinal Suhard, Essor ou déclin de l'Égîise, Lettre pastorale, Paris. 1947, p. 3-4.

48 ■ Father Chenu, For a theology of mwatl. eoll. Book of Life, n* 53. Seuil. 1955. p. 107-108,

49 - According to Father Congar, during the Algerian war, Father Chenu "visited the history of Arab philosophy. "(Congar. A goose for U irritated, Jean Piiyu questions Fr.

The worst Roger-Thomas Calmel

Christian! Once I heard Freud spoken of as a man who soiled the innocence of children! And see how Maritain, in Le paysan de la Garonne, speaks of Heidegger. It is quite miserable for a man of his intelligence and quality. (...) Remember how we used to talk about "Kantism"! The result was deplorable.

This curious and dissatisfied spirit entered the Dominicans on November 19, 1925. There, at the school of Father Chenu, he thought he understood that "in the philosophical domain, Saint Thomas was certainly out of date" (p. 38). One boasted of knowing the great Dominican doctor well, but "he was studied historically". For, "everything is absolutely historical, including the person of Jesus Christ. (...) Note that historical does not only mean that Jesus came at a moment in time, but - and we must draw the consequences of this fact - he is conditioned by the time in which he lives. "(p. 43) Here is God conditioned by men!

Father Chenu was also the cause of what his student calls his "ecumenical vocation" (p. 75).

Father Congar was ordained a priest on July 25, 1930, and was immediately appointed to Paris where he had the opportunity to feed his appetite for new things.

I followed in Paris, at the Hautes Études, a very beautiful course of Gilson on Luther; and I attended, for five months, the faculty of Protestant theology with the authorization of my superiors, in spite of the unfavorable opinion of a Father who would have said: “You are throwing him into the arms of the apostasy! (…) There I got to know future pastors (…) and Louis Bouyer with whom I was to become friends.

At the same time, from January to June 1932, I frequented a small group where one met Maritain, Berdiaeff, Serge Boulgakov, Father Lev Gillet, a Catholic priest who had become Orthodox, and Emmanuel Mounier (p. 76). This is how I came to read Barth. I met him for the first time in Paris in 1934. I invited him to the Cerf publishing house, then in Juvisy, with Gilson, Maritain, Gabriel Marcel, and some others. It was a small event: a Protestant theologian in a Catholic convent! That was not done!

Following this meeting, I gave a course on Barth at the Saulchoir.

This encounter with Protestantism did not leave the Dominican indifferent! Let us judge from his own words:

Luther. This man had a very strong influence on my research. (…) This man is one of the greatest religious geniuses of all history. In this respect I put him on the same level as St. Augustine, St. Paul and St. Paul.

Thomas Aquinas or Pascal. In a certain way, he is even greater, he has rethought the whole of Christianity. He has given a new synthesis, a new interpretation.

(…) I have studied Luther a great deal. Hardly a month goes by without my returning to his writings. I am not afraid to say it: I have admiration for him, (…) Luther is a giant; I will not boast of having grasped all the aspects of his doctrine (59-61). Some Protestants say that if Luther came back after Vatican II, he would not separate himself from Rome (p. 62).

In 1936, Father Congar preached the week for unity at Montmartre. His conferences provided the material for his first book. Chrétiens désunis, with the subtitle. Principles of a Catholic Ecumenism (p. 78). It was then that the idea of directing a collection of works, entitled Umm sanctam, was born in him, whose afFichted intention was “to modify in depth the image that the Church had of itself” (p. 82), “an image that was too juridical, authoritarian. “

Here is what the Roman authorities did not like: his vision of the Church which “challenged the pyramidal, hierarchical, juridical system put in place by the Counter-Reformation. My ecclesiology was that of the “people of God”. “(p.l02)

This was already the theme that would triumph at the Second Vatican Council, inseparable from that of the “Church as communion” that Father Congar borrowed from Emmanuel Mounier:

I see the whole Church worked by the Spirit, made up of a multiplicity of persons each receiving gifts from the Spirit and living in communion. Here we encounter the great modern personalist theme, such as that of Emmanuel Mounier, for example. Your developed: the person, as a unique, irreplaceable subject, and at the same time as a community (p. 216).

After the war, Father Yves Congar was perhaps the most widely read of French theologians. He was invited

everywhere to discuss burning questions (the laity, true and false reform in the Church, Protestants, etc.), acclaimed even in progressive Germany as a "prophetic man.

The Dominican authorities

Such innovators, who championed ecumenism and "openness to the world" could not fail to worry the Roman authorities. (What was the reaction of their religious superiors? Here is how Father Congar experienced his "troubles with Rome":

They began even before the war, with the publication of Chrétiens désunis in 1937. Father Gillet, my father general, had called me to Paris; an article had appeared against me in the Osservofore romano, signed by the master of the Sacred Palace, Father Cordovani; but that was all (p. 100). When I published the translation of Moehler's work, Unity in the Church, my troubles began again. (...) Father Gillet warned me that I was going to receive from the Holy Office, through the archbishopric of Paris, a prohibition to sell the book. And he added: "Continue" (p. 101).

Moreover, he could also count on the discreet support of the Archbishop of Paris, Cardinal Verdier. In 1950, Pope Pius XII published his encyclical Humanigeneris.conat the "modern theology". Father Congar recounts; Father Suarez, who was then our Father General, had warned me, while he was passing through Paris; "In a few days an encyclical will appear, read it very carefully, there are things that concern you (p. 106). "

This encyclical dealt a severe blow to research… I was about to publish a book. True and false reform in the Church. I immediately spoke to Father Suarez about it. The book was in press; I was correcting the proofs when the encyclical appeared. Father Suarez, who was not a man to be moved, answered me with that phlegm which characterized him;” Good! (p. 106)”

From then on I had to submit everything I published to the Roman authorities for approval. Thus I entrusted to Father General the manuscript of a new edition of Christians Disunited. For two years, despite numerous letters, I had no news of it. One day in 1950, Father Suarez brought it back to me, asking me to make some changes. “What should I change? What is the censor’s criticism? “Change something,” he answered, refusing to specify anything. Discouraged, I gave up.

(…) I have been perfectly loyal; I have not published anything without obtaining this famous nihil obstat (p.l07).

The summer of 1953 saw the first measures against the worker-priests. Some Dominican fathers were included in this condemnation because of their active participation in the meetings and congresses of the various groups targeted by the reprimand from Rome. Father Congar tells us;

It was in January 1954 that I myself was affected. (…) I returned to Paris on February 2, and on February 8 I was summoned by the Father General to our convent in the Faubourg Saint-Honoré. I went there and found Fathers Chenu and Albert-Marie Avril, who were themselves summoned. Father General told us: “The situation is

extremely serious. Rome is worried about the orientation of the French Dominicans and wants to take measures. The provincials are going to be changed; from now on, they will be named directly by the Holy See." Immediately, I answered: "If this is so, my religious vows fall, for I made them according to certain constitutions; if these change, my vows no longer commit me. "- "You are right," the Father General answered me. On the other hand," he continued, "a certain number of Fathers do not please Rome; they will have to be removed," - "They were Fathers Chenu, Féret, Boisselot and myself. Without hesitating, I answered: "Father, if you wish, I will gladly go to Jerusalem. "(...) Chenu in Rouen, Boisselot in Dijon, where he was elected prior" (p. 108-109).

It was in Jerusalem that I learned of the accidental death of Father Suarez, our Father General. He was a very loyal man, fraternal and perfectly fair. 11 always defended us, protected us, never withdrew his confidence (p. 109).

Father Congar knew that he was covered by his direct superiors and by certain cardinals and bishops. 11 was also covered by political figures;

Professor Le Bras had my confidence. (...) He never ceased to defend me, to present me as the good theologian of a true reform, D'Ormesson, our ambassador to the Vatican, was also marvelous in my regard.

The Dominican was then sent to England in February 1956 from where he returned a few months later;

At the end of the year, the general reassigned me to Strasbourg, because the bishop, Mgr Weber, was in my favor. He had intervened in Rome in my favor. 11 welcomed me very well. From that moment on, I had no more difficulties.

Strasbourg is a university town. I was able to work, give lectures, and preach (p. 112).

Father Roger-Thomas Calmel

This rehabilitation had an unexpected outcome. Father Congar was indeed invited to participate in the Second Vatican Council, as a consultant to the theological commission. “Father de Lubac told me later that it was John XXIII himself who had insisted that both of us be members of this commission. “(p. 124) At the end of his life, Father Congar received a consecration of his “good services” for the new in the Church through his elevation to the cardinalate by Pope John Paul II on November 26, 1994.

Caution is the key to success

It was necessary to dwell at some length on the situation of the Dominican Order in the post-war years in order to understand the environment in which Father Calmel had to move and the choices he was led to make later on. The perplexity in which the young Father Roger had found himself at the Catholic Institute of Toulouse, and then the young Dominican during his studies at Saint-Maximin, was growing. The modernizing tendencies were becoming more and more evident. Later on, the son of St. Dominic was to launch severe anathemas against the new tendencies and their ministers, but while waiting for God’s hour, he wanted to keep a certain reserve. Not out of cowardice or illusion, but out of intellectual prudence. In order to defend with dignity the truth of the Church of all times, it was necessary to remain as objective as possible and therefore to avoid getting bogged down in questions of persons. It was necessary to approach the writings of the innovators with benevolence, to know how to discern in them the truth from

the falsehood, and to answer them firmly in due course but also with kindness.

The article in the special issue of the Revue Thomiste (1-2, 1948) devoted to Jacques Matitain, which we have already mentioned, gives a good example. The very fact of Father Calmel's contribution is significant. How is it that such an honest theologian mixes his voice, without the slightest reservation, to this panegyric of the personalist philosopher, when others had already stigmatized him with lucidity?

Louis Jugnet, for example, complained, during a conference to the students of the Cercle Pic X in Toulouse, on December 11, 1953:

The Dominicans devote to Maritain a curious number - that's the word - a kind of premature canonization and adulation

Wiilcbrands. See ìsDocumentation catholitpie n" 2107 rlu 1" ja

The Dominican sky is darkening j ^ j

systematic, with suggestive photo of the Master, praises, glosses, com At the same time, Maritain had already been refuted by eminent men: Bishop of Astorga (province of Leon) Jesus-Merida Ferez, in his Lenten pastoral letter (1948) La restauraciôn cristiana del orden nolitico, states that he sees in it a doctrine "contrary to all the teachings of the Church." He speaks of the "absurdity of Maritainism". Charles de Koninck at the University of Quebec, Father Julio Meinvielle, Argentine, "Maritainism is not a more or less acceptable opinion, it is an error already fully condemned in the encyclicals of Gregory XVI. Pius IX and Pius X""

Father Calmel would later come to the same conclusions. While keeping a sincere gratitude towards the one who had

“largely contributed to make known the thought of the common doctor”, he will severely reproach him for having tried to merge Thomism with contemporary eras. “Less reformist than revolutionary”, Maritain came to justify “the aberrant directions of the moderns”.

At the end of the 1940s, the young Father Calmel had not yet reached that point. Not that the new doctrines of Jacques Maritain were to his taste. But he preferred to withhold his public judgment. No doubt, first of all, because his ministry to souls and his collaboration in the written apostolate of his province did not lead him to frequent the works we have just quoted. But it seems to us that the reason for his silence must be seen further on.

The first reason for his omission is to be found in father Calmel’s origins. Coming from a very poor peasant family, Gagnol’s son was not of the

54 - Louis Jugnci, conference reproduced AmsL’OrdrrJrartpiis n” 176. December 1973, p. 25-39.

55 ■ In the practical realm, Jacques Maritain was hardly more commendable, not only in the role he played following the condemnation of Action Française, but also during the Spanish War (1936-1939) when “he systematically supported, in concert with Emmanuel Mounicr and François Mauriac, the Spanish Reds against the Catholic Bltincs. (...) During the war of 1939. he is refugee in the United States, plays a role of exciter on the radio: he writes

For U justice 335): “Seeing ladmirablc unity of the French Resistance, we com s* revolutionary and Christian tradition of France, the cooperation of the peupk

held.” ” (/” Louis jugnet. op. ciL, p. 27-28)

The work was too exhausting to leave any room for curiosity. Work was too exhausting to leave any room for curiosity and idleness. Moreover, his parents, good Christians, zealous and courageous, were not particularly prepared to fight against subversion and modernism. They were not from those great French families who had fought for generations against the revolution and liberalism. It was the philosophy and theology of St. Thomas Aquinas, the experience and the instinct of faith alone that gave Father Calmel the lucidity and the ardor to discover and fight against the new,

On the other hand, the young Roger had entered the Order of St. Dominic to find a father and brothers. Now, at home, the family spirit was particularly developed. This disposed him to judge with indulgence the Dominican initiatives. This would make his disappointment even more bitter later on when he was obliged to note the decadence of his brothers. This positive attitude was all the more legitimate since the errors that were spread everywhere would have remained a marginal phenomenon if they had not been encouraged or protected by the authorities. The heavy clouds that obscured the sky of the Church should have and could have passed, as they did thanks to the vigilance and firmness of Saint Pius X.

Alas, as we have seen, the highest ecclesiastical dignities had covered up for the main perpetrators: in Paris, Cardinals Suhard and Gerlier, in Lille, Cardinal Liénart, in Strasbourg, Mgr Weber, in Rome. In the Dominican order, the Masters General themselves had repeatedly shown their sympathy for the innovators. However, this connivance of the authorities was obviously still unknown to Father Calmel. It

was only later, when he had deepened his knowledge of the techniques of subversion and when the facts had spoken for themselves, that he would grasp the full extent of the crisis.

On the other hand, the young priest had been brought up to have great respect for the elders. Every day, since his entry into the Dominican order, he had been in contact with eminent theologians and preachers who commanded respect. There had been Father Vayssière, then there were Fathers Gardeil. Joret, Gillet, Bruckberger, Philippon and so many others. In his modesty, Father Calmel already considered himself very happy to deserve to live in their company. He did not feel burdened

57 ‘ A sign of this delicate conscience can be found in Father Calmel’s collaboration with the magazine Ilinéraires. In 1961, he told Jean Madiran that he did not want to take a direct part in the work of the magazine.

This did not prevent the young priest from being vigorous and speaking out. In 1943, for example, a former provincial soldier applied to join the Order. But he had been a Freemason. In accordance with the prescription of Canon Law and the Constitutions, he had to be refused. In the face of those who hesitated, Father Calmel showed a severe and wise intransigence. And, during the time of his formation in the convent of Saint-Maximin, he had already perceived some weaknesses in the religious life and in the studies In 1957. >- He was very saddened by the abandonment of the convent of Saint-Maximin which he had loved so much, and saw in it the beginning of a drift. Some Dominican Sisters of the Holy Name of Jesus had been present at the compiles

that followed the blessing of the first stone of the “new Jacobins”. One of them tells us: “When I returned, I told Father Calmel of my enthusiasm. He received me at sword point! He showed me how misplaced my enthusiasm was, and enlightened me on what the sale of Saint-Maximin represented. “However, on the outside, nothing appeared of these light criticisms which were shared by other fathers.

Finally, let us note another reason for Father Calmel’s reserve with regard to the shifts of his confreres, which will play a great role later on.

From his early years in the minor seminary of BonEncontre, and increasingly so over the years, Father Calmel had sensed the gap between the great ideal he had made his own and the kind of life of many of his classmates, and later of his confreres. An insistent movement of grace urged him to ever greater prayer, to a more and more loving and intimate union with God, to a generous work to advance the kingdom of God, to a gift of self to the point of toral sacrifice. This fire that burned him made him feel in a way that was as painful as it was lucid the need for a profound and radical reform of the Church and the clergy. But what direction should be followed? To inaugurate a reform worthy of those of the twelfth, fifteenth or seventeenth century, where should we begin? With oneself, of course. But after that? How could one restore to a multitude the spirit of faith and the zeal of love? How could the desire for holiness be enlivened in the liturgical life and in the moral life, in the instirurions and in the doctrine, in the world of the ■n,cllc,.iucl5 and that of the illiterate, in the family and in the city?

58 - Report of im witness.

59 ■ Interview in Toulon, 1969.

* - Testimony of a Dominican sister.

r H -r ardent and somewhat impatient for a reform made Father Cabnel favourable to all the initiatives that would fail in this direction. This is why the young, fiery and generous Father was willing to take on certain bold initiatives, provided they were governed by the sale of goods and by an authentic sense of the Church.

In this regard, the reverend Mother Hélène, who will be mentioned soon, sometimes said to him in a joking tone: “Father, you have your head on the right,

but the heart on the left! “

Others were misled by some of Father Calmcl’s attitudes. Witness this Sulpician priest from Aix-en-Provence who had had Father Calmel as a student at the seminary in Toulouse. In 1960, he made the following statement to a young sister:

He was someone who knew what he wanted. He spoke easily, was interested in all the innovations. He already advocated the reading of the Mass in French. 11 was a young progressive for a while, and he became a fundamentalist! You just have to let him down*’.

Neither of these two labels (progressive - fundamentalist) was ever applied to Father Calmel, but they show how confusing and unconformist was always the reaction of the son of Saint Dominic. In his ardor for the glory of God, for the Church and for souls, he sought the way to a true and lasting reform. Holy Providence gave him the opportunity to

realize his intuition by collaborating in the reform of the teaching Dominicans of the Holy Name of Jesus.

1 - Testimony of the

The Dominican Teaching Sisters

IT WAS IN this troubled post-war period, in which the world seemed to be searching for itself, and in which too many Christians were making it their duty to imitate it, that Father Calmel received from his superiors the ministry of the Dominican teaching sisters.

The Congregation of the Dominican Teaching Sisters of the Holy Name of Jesus was founded in 1800 by Father Vincens of Toulouse. In 1886, the institute was affiliated to the Order of St. Dominic, under the generalate of Mother Hélène Daguzan, thanks to the good care of Blessed Father Hyacinthe-Marie Cormier, then provincial of Toulouse. In 1905, the sisters were the victims of the odious expulsions orchestrated by the Masonic government of the Third Republic. Should they then go into exile abroad, as some very authorized voices advised them to do? Encouraged by Pope Pius X, they preferred to make the sacrifice of the religious habit to remain in France and to continue their work with the children. “The soul of the little children of France is well worth the heroic sacrifices made in their favor,” the pontiff had them respond. It was not until 1942 that the sisters were able to wear the habit again in public.

Mother Hélène Jamet

Father Calmel had already begun his ministry as ordinary confessor to the Dominican sisters when, in 1948, a certain Mother Hélène Jamet was elected Prioress General. The young Dominican had already benefited from her charity

since she was prioress of the house in Toulon at the time of his ordination to the priesthood and had welcomed his family after the ceremony. Moreover, he had been able to

Father Roger-Thomas Calmel

Roger-Thomas Calmel had been able to meet her on the occasion of her visits to Toulouse, which were required by her position as first assistant to the Mother General.

It is appropriate to introduce the Reverend Mother Hélène Jamet, because she was associated on several occasions with Father Calmel's decisions and played a major role

Claire-Marie was born on April 5, 1902, the third of a family that would soon include a fourth child. From her childhood, she had to fight against a very full and capricious nature. Gifted with an astonishing understanding for her age and a prodigious memory, even before she could read, she would memorize the books her father read aloud to her. She was mocking and teased her older sister Jeanne. Thanks to the decree Qiiam singulari of St. Pius X of August 8, 1910 on the age of first communion, Claire-Marie was able to approach the holy table in January 1911. According to M. and M"" Jamet, the event profoundly changed the character of the little girl. From the age of twelve, her sister assures us, she thought about the religious life. In August 1914, as war broke out, Mr. Jamet was stricken with a very serious illness and died on November 8, 1914. This was a great shock for the whole family and especially for little Claire-Marie.

In 1919, the Dominican Sisters of the Holy Name of Jesus took over the direction of the course in Bordeaux in which the Jamet girls were studying and which became the Albert-le-Grand course. Claire-Marie obtained her baccalaureate in literature in 1920-1921 and began her studies which she

pursued until she obtained a license in classical literature in July 1924. Only then did her mother give her permission to realize her dream. She entered the Sisters of the Holy Name of Jesus in Montréjeau in September. On the day she took the habit, in April 1925, Claire-Marie Jamet became Sister Hélène.

In the novitiate, the young sister was in the school of nuns who had lived through the terrible years of government persecution of 1904-1907 and then of the war and who had spent their lives in the service of the girls of France. From these venerable elders, Sister Hélène received the true meaning of her congregation, made of modesty and strength, simplicity and depth. Much later, she would tell the novices around her about the lessons of the past: "Everything worth doing," said her novice mistress, "deserves to be done well. "To give one's will, that is, to use it only for the Lord, is something different from having lost it. When one has lost, one seeks. When one has given, one is abandoned. "

After her first vows on April 23, 1927, Sister Hélène was appointed to the Cours Saint-Albert-le-Grand in Bordeaux, where she had done her studies. From the very beginning, she was much appreciated by the students as well as by the parents for her competence and depth.

In 1929, she participated in the foundation of Toulon.

From then on, Sister Hélène showed a very theological vision of things and a great balance. She wrote to one of her former students in Bordeaux:

I'm glad you're interested in your work: it proves that you're not one of those brainless little girls like so many of them, those people who find everything material exciting, and

everything that is an idea boring… I would like to know if my brave ninth grade class has become an ugly second, loosely following in the footsteps of its elders “because it’s easier. I had kind of hoped that there would be some courage to react and take the lead. In everything that is a group, one needs so much courage and examples of courage not to walk like Panurge’s sheep.

Mother Hélène’s short experience already confirmed what she had heard from her mistresses. In one of her letters, she wrote

You will always have to fight against yourself and then, as for the others, a boarding school is indeed a small world, many uglinesses and false ideas that you will meet later, you must already know how to recognize them and hate them, while trying to love the people who think wrongly and act wrongly, wanting to cure them, wanting it so much for the love of God, that you forget yourself for them, that’s how you are happy in life as in a boarding school, I can assure you.

To a student who had just lost her father, she could speak from experience: “In the end, it is a great grace, however hard it is, to be forced to face life in this way, on the threshold of youth. I remember the anguish that takes you but also the burst of saving energy; poor people who could remain without worries, without responsibilities, without decisions to be taken, at least interior! They are happy with a poor happiness.

a head to lead others along the right path, a strength to protect, a value to enlighten, a goodness to love and

console”.

Strength and Christian personality, but linked to a great gentleness, is what appears in the following letter:

Be calm, I beg you; you are doing well to work as hard as you can; when we want to succeed in anything, we must strive with all our small human strength; but afterwards, and even during this effort, we must keep our minds at peace knowing that the rest belongs to the good Lord. It seems to us, you see, that certain things are indispensable (…) and we ask the good Lord for them with a vengeance, ready to be angry if he doesn’t want to; but we see small, we hypnotize ourselves on a detail; he sees far, he looks at the whole and he knows what is appropriate for our good and that of others; then with love, he hurts us. Let us try to understand always and to find ourselves well in his hand”.

This calmness and gentle assurance, which had its source in union with God, accompanied Mother Hélène Jamet throughout her life. While still a student in Bordeaux, she had braved a merry band of boys who were a little too familiar with the group of young girls who accompanied her. Then, during the last war, she maintained serenity in the Toulon house. To the anxious parents who questioned her, “What do you do in case of a bombing? “She answered calmly: “We wait for the first bomb to fall and we go down to the cellar. “It is with the same bonhomie that she answered one day to a person - who considered herself very tired and said to her; “I must go to relax” -; “But, what do you need to stretch you? “

Without knowing it, the mother Hélène summarized her own character in the following lines, which she addressed with strength and delicacy to a student who had just lost her parents;

Many others, at your age, have an easy life and are still children, as you would be without all these misfortunes, but believe that you are the one who is favored and that the good God is making of you, in spite of yourself, a woman of head and heart.

65 - Mother Hélcncjamci, Toulon, April 1931.

66 - Mother Hélène Jamci. Toulon, July 26, 1931.

This “role in the life of the father

Calmel. If “Calmel” became the spiritual father of this nun, twelve years older than her, bringing her a certainty of faith and a generous impetus in the life of union with God, the daughter communicated to the zealous preacher a note of gentleness and tranquility that would become the backdrop for even his most vivid invectives against modernism and subversion.

Their first meeting took place, as we have already mentioned, during the priestly ordination of Father Calmel in Toulon.

As soon as he returned from Marseille in 1946, the young Dominican was appointed by his superiors as ordinary confessor of the teaching sisters whose mother house was very close to the Dominican convent. In 1947, he preached the preparatory retreat for perpetual vows.

Upon her election as Prioress General in July 1948, Mother Hélène Jamet returned to Toulouse and resumed contact with Father Calmel. The Chapter had barely ended when she

became seriously ill and received the sacraments from the ordinary confessor. She was able to appreciate his theological and mystical depth and his accurate perception of the life of the Dominican teaching sisters. When she recovered her health, she took many opportunities to ask him for the advice she needed.

From the outset, Mother Hélène Jamet endeavored to give back to the Congregation the mark of simplicity and modesty which she herself had received from the ancient mothers and which defined her so well. She began by simplifying the habit and some of the customs. Little by little, she wanted to do away with the habit of organizing fairs which had become established almost everywhere. These were an open door to a worldly spirit, she said, and absorbed the strength of the sisters at the expense of the essential of religious teaching life. “Let those who understand what it is to give alms clearly do so; we have only to receive it without shame. “

Such measures, largely supported by the advice of Father Calmel, were not to the taste of all, especially those who were too attached to the “beautiful society” of Toulouse and to a certain panache which flattered the “what will people say”. These reticences augured the storms which were soon to fall on Mother Hélène and Father Calmel.

A Dominican Master

During the 1949-1950 school year, he was asked by Mother Hélène to give weekly classes which he was able to start in January 1950.

However, before collaborating further with her with the sisters, the young priest set a condition: “I will never,” he said, “take care of the congregation if it is not consecrated to the Blessed Virgin. “So it was decided, and the consecration was carefully prepared in all the communities during the Holy Year 1950. It was carried out on March 25, 1951, after the Easter Vigil celebrated in the cathedral of Saint-Etienne in Toulouse

Father Calmel’s courses were addressed to professed novices living in Toulouse and to young sisters in perpetual vows for whom experience already made them feel the need for a solid philosophical and rheological formation. He applied himself to forming the sisters’ minds according to a rigorous plan based on Sacred Scripture, the encyclicals of the popes, Saint Thomas Aquinas and his best commentators. It is striking to see the variety and difficulty of the subjects treated, and the abundance of sources used by the young professor. One moved lightly from serious questions of theology and philosophy to questions of culture (art, poetry, literature) and current affairs.

The courses were freely enamelled with frequent quotations from the great classical works from Antiquity to the present day and with practical applications to the work of teaching.

Far from being content with these courses, Father Calmel composed texts that he delivered to the sisters™ for study. In addition, to encourage personal and intelligent work, he had his listeners do homework’L

A former mother tells of the profound transformation that Father Calmel’s lectures brought about in her own classes. The following year, she put into practice the advice she had heard, and she herself was surprised by the results. The

children in her eighth grade class felt much more at ease with the world.

67 - This was the first Easter vigil according to the restoration made by Pope Pius XII.

69 - Man’s nature and state, The human person, Freedom. The virtues seen as the face of the 4th

A doctrinal rigor. For the love and souls. Suggestions on the history of France, postulants on their vocation. How to read the Old Testament, The spirit of the third Gospel, Saint Luke and Saint John, Qtteltjues notions of metaphysics. Notes on the maintenance of faith in the life of jasnille. Tris

Indications on the virtue of hope. Definition of the Church, The Gospel and Society. Indications on IX ‘The Passion and the Resurrection, OnTintdligence.

The Dominican teaching sisters

Father Calmel was right.

Encouraged by these first attempts, Mother Hélène Jamet invited Father Calmel to give classes at Montréjeau where the postulancy and simple novitiate were located, and then to teach at the study sessions that took place at Castelneau d’Estrètefonds, near Toulouse, during the summer months. You would see him arrive in the community room or the novitiate, armed with a large satchel full of books and notes, ready to impart the truth that moved him. In his cloak, U had made two large pockets, which became legendary, in which he could stuff a pair of clean shoes so as not to mix them with his books.

One day, while he was giving a course to professed novices in Toulouse, a hawker passed by in the street, calling out the

titles of the newspapers he was selling. He called out La Dépêche, which advertised a blasphemous play by Jean-Paul Sartre, Le Diable et le bon Dieu. Father Calmel interrupted his lecture with this invective: “Yes, my friend, we know. It is the devil who is the master! “On this occasion, the Dominican mobilized some students and fathers of his acquaintance who were able to prevent the presentation of the play.

During the school year 1952-1953, the courses in Toulouse continued, as well as the internal writings of the congregation” and personal duties”. The preacher met again with the sisters at Castelneau during the session at Qitasimodo in April 1953, where he studied the question of good, evil and freedom.

72. Uniformer student of the Sainte-Catherine de Sienne course in Aix-en-Piovence, today a religious. Limoignc even today of the change that she could perceive in the courses that she rccc 73 - Lumière^ dejàus et sophismes modernes, L’Église et le temporel. The Smliei of Satin, To read and

74 - Why I love St. Dominic, The Church of the Incarnate Word History of the Church (1789-1870), i tneide and U sense of sin, The Christian conscience. On angels and St. Joseph, The existence of God <i immortality of the soul, Theology of the spirit world angels and Satan, Religious spirit and angelic spirit, The study in your life, l^ctor Hugo, Who is the Son of Man? Small code to write and to study. The laws of nature and freedom. J.-P. Sartre. Small philosophical lexicon. On the happiness of Fra Angelico. Theological elevations on the Holy Spirit. On the Holy Trinity. Prayer of the apostle

The worst Roger-Thomas Calmel

In 1953-1954, one senses that Father Calmel was more preoccupied with subjects that were perhaps more fundamental and whose seriousness was becoming more and more apparent in current events. We find in his courses on doctrine, in his texts for distribution", in his conferences to the novices "*, the great principles which should guide the Christian, and especially the religious, in the turmoil.

The conferences and courses of the 1954-1955 school year show Father Calmel's desire to have the sisters drink from the very pure and sure source of the Church's magisterium". Then there were texts and conferences on the growing dangers that state teaching* represented for the Catholic school. With the approaching storm, it was necessary to return to the clearest principles and to keep minds alert to the danger.

Those who have experience in preaching or teaching know how much a teacher is influenced by his audience. If he stands in front of an awake, interested and attentive audience, he will reach much more easily a high thought, he will find the right words and that strength of conviction which makes a good speaker. This is obviously what happened to Father Calmel. Calmel found among the Dominican Sisters of the Holy Name of Jesus souls that were thirsty, spirits that were eager for light, hearts that had understood too well their responsibility as spiritual mothers and teachers to be satisfied with an approximation. U was thus able to give its full dimension, without worrying about sparing sensitivities. And he did an impressive job of preparation and writing to respond with dignity to such a pressing request.

If we look at the texts of Father Calmel's conferences and courses of this period, we can see very well that beyond the real erudition that he transmitted to his listeners, it was the personal reflection of each one that he sought,

76 - La Saintt Église, La morale clmtienne. Person and life of Black Lord Jesus Christ.

77 ' Your place in the Church, The spirit and the letter, The Church from the point of view of authority. There is no other Church than the official Church, Viede communauté dans sa jonction ensetf^tante. Unity of life, Ave Maris SkWz, Introduction on purity, Should we bet on sin? Commentary on the encyclical Szcn y iTg,\nk3S, Integral note on the Mass, The Council of Orange, The encyclicals Libenas and Immonalc Del But also subjects directly related to teaching (The secondary role of grammar. For the teaching of French. Les devoirs defrançais) or art and literature (Lefilm. Polyeucte, Ronsard, Racine, Le tragique et son dépassement, La tragédie au xvtt'siècle, Antigone, Pascal, Voltaire).

78 - Virgincs Christi, Charity, Fraternal charity, Loyalty, Prudence. Humility,

79 - The Council of Trent (decree on justification, on sin, on grace, on the Redemption, on the Mass) and again the encyclicals and Immortale Dei, Casti connubii (three lessons).

80 - To use the official philosophy program. The Catholic school in front of the official programs

he deeply Christian way of thinking, a right application of principles in all the circumstances of life. The young Dominican, who was just in his tenth year of priesthood, had already known too many examples among his brothers in religion, of religious who had acquired a very vast knowledge of the philosophical and theological sciences, but who quickly fell into the prevailing liberalism or even into the most relentless modernism. They could quote the best authors, but they did not understand them. On the contrary, Father Calmel felt charged by divine providence, which spoke to him through his superiors, to give his sisters in St. Dominic not only a broad and elevated knowledge, but true wisdom. He had to teach them to think for themselves, and to swim

against the tide if necessary.

The father of souls

Beyond his ministry as preacher to the Congregation of the Dominican Sisters of the Holy Name of Jesus, Father Calmel was for many of them a true spiritual father. As ordinary confessor of the house of Toulouse since 1946, and then in the multiple contacts occasioned by his conferences and sessions at Castelneau, he had manifested a supernatural spirit, a surety of judgment and a sensitivity for souls which won the confidence of many sisters. The testimony of the former sisters can be summed up in one short sentence: “He was a father to me. “One mother, who entered in 1941, described him as “very firm in doctrine, but very cheerful. He loved to laugh! “And he was known to be so close to the needs, joys and sorrows of each one. One day, the novice mistress with her daughters had the idea of making a pilgrimage on foot to Lourdes from Montréjeau. Faced with the reluctance of the Mother Prioress and the community, Father Calmel defended the novitiate: “I will say Mass for

them at 5 a.m., then I will give them a blessing. They are young, they will make it. “To one sister he forbade the reading of Saint-Exupéry, which he found too complicated and perhaps even dangerous for her. To all of them, he often preached silence.

From the testimonies collected, we can note three features of her spiritual direction with the Dominican Sisters.

- Martha and Mary

To each one of those who confided in him, the religious applied and adapted “the great principles that he was developing at the time in the courts of Toulouse or Montrejeau. Each sister had to be able to live in truth the great motto

Dominican motto of contemplari et contempUta aliis tradere. Now, if this motto can be understood very well in theory, it is difficult to put into practice. In “Martha and Mary”, it is not so much Martha’s work or Mary’s silence that creates difficulties, but rather the conjunction “and” that unites them. For contemplation and preaching, or teaching in the case of the Dominican sisters, are not two juxtaposed elements but constitute two movements of the same life, the apostolic life.

And so, he explained to one of them, “the ‘active’ must be saints, but without saying so: where they are, without shirking their post. And it would be a mistake to cut our lives in two and “put mysticism next to the job to be done” or to reserve the high union with God promised by the Gospel for desert hermits. For, in the end, “all the saints are

contemplative; that is obvious; but in many the kind of life is the active life: that is to say, the life that God wants to see entrusted to the neighbor. Now this would not be Christian without the primacy of contemplation. “

It is by the degree of our love and thus of our union with God that we must “judge the value of our activities, not by the time spent or by fatigue”. For we must go to souls from God. “Children need sisters who are alive, happy, attentive to themselves, sisters .who have fixed their hearts in Jesus Christ, who have fixed their lives in God; sisters who are always enthusiastic and not harried sisters, arriving at prayer without preparation. “

Moreover, the action itself, above all a work of teaching, leads the apostle to union with God. Of course, the teaching sister must be competent, but “deeper in her than the immediate concern for the class to be taught and for discipline, the mission of helping to build up these poor little Christian girls, of helping to heal these poor intoxicated girls, this mission must foster in the sister a continual prayer, a great recollection, a profound humility in order to grasp the true doctrine and to be attached to it. “

Consequently, the Dominican was not at all afraid of apostolic work, as long as it was regulated by prudence: “Destroy passivity, he said, let them be active. Let them live beyond their apparent possibilities. They certainly have a lot of work, their life is very active, but it is healthy. “

Certainly, such activity in the service of souls requires a great deal of balance, the fruit of humility and simplicity. The apostle who takes himself too seriously, who believes himself to be “in charge of a mission”, will inevitably seek to confiscate souls and works. On the contrary, Father Calmel

gave to one of the Dominican sisters this advice which says a lot about his own spirituality:

“Acknowledge before God: ‘I am a little good woman of common measure, but chosen by God. “

11 will one day engage Mother Hélène Jamet to teach the young people who are ascending that peace, balance, and the descent into their hearts of the eight Beatitudes are achieved day by day through detachment and prayer. Many hardly suspect that they should be much quieter, much less noisy and grumbling in their hearts. And when they suspect it, they avoid taking the only path that leads to it: prayer and abnegation. Teach them, my daughter, this way of access to inner equilibrium, to peace in God, without which all education comes to nothing; and even the dispensation of light is terribly hindered if it does not come from a soul that dwells in God and in his pabc…

- Lajoie

One of the fruits of this peaceful simplicity, which Father Calmel, as a good Dominican, held dear, is that of joy. The soul can only develop and reach its full bloom in a climate of joy. For, he said to a sister: “Sullenness, grumpiness, bad temper (are) the different varieties of egoism. React for the love of God. “

The good Father had noticed a novice who was much too sad and sullen. He went to look up in some books the various times when Our Lady had been invoked as Our Lady of Joy, Our Lady who makes people smile, and he gave the young sister the following paper:

To a sister who never smiles:

Invoke Sancta Maria, hilaris plena... Our Lady of Liesse, Mary,

- Around 1032-1050. Piety towards the joys of Our Lady. Five joys in relation to the five wounds of Christ, or as a reminder of the letters of the word MARIA.

- XII’s. Saint Thomas of Canterbury recited seven Hail Marys each day in honor of the seven joys of Mary. To reward him, the Blessed Virgin appeared to him and told the holy archbishop about the seven heavenly joys that made her happy in Heaven. These seven joys begin with Gaude flore virginalis.

- xm ‘ s. The oldest litany of the Blessed Virgin, that of Mainz, invokes “Holy Mary, mother of eternal joy”.

- 1240, the order of the Servants of Mary recites every Saturday the office or crown of the seven joys of the Virgin: Annunciation, Nativity,

adoration of the Magi. Resurrection, Ascension, Pentecost, Assumption (or “final joy”),

- Saint Louis de Brignoles, bishop of Toulouse (1297), recited every day, after the seven psalms of penance, the seven joys of the Virgin.

- Saint Vincent Ferrier (c. 1419) is the great preacher of the joys of Our Lady.

- The Benedictine Dom Wilmort states that the Rosary as a meditation of the mysteries is derived from the joys of Our Lady.

- God is the source of joy” (Saint Francis de Sales).

- Every grace comes to us through a smile of Our Lady” (Pius XII).

Sancta Maria, hilaris et plena lœtitia,

Sancta Maria meffabik gaudium nosirum, ora pro nobis (xvi’s., xvii’s.)

Besides, the preacher preached by example. He often made his laughter resound with sound and communication. One sister tells us that as a novice she had to translate from Latin to French a passage from the Council of Trent. She brought the fruit of her work to Father Calmel, saying ingenuously: “I think I have understood, but… I have too many words (Latin)! “Father Calmel left with a great burst of rite.

- In a time of crisis

At the same time that he directed souls towards the heights of the spiritual life, Father Calmel wanted to keep them in realism. If the great principles of the religious and spiritual life must be held at all times, they are all the more imperative in times of decadence or crisis. To remain faithful to Christ and to his will in these circumstances, one needs not only more strength, but a clearer understanding. The young priest reminded everyone of their duty to be “of their time”, not to follow it but to convert it, not to become dull with the masses but to make the evils of the time serve the

good of the Church and of souls. The duty of holiness obliges in time

Now we are in 1950, and Father Calmel already sees the times of darkness that will soon fall on the Church and on the world. In a sermon given to some Dominican nuns on December 14, 1950, he let out his pain and thus showed his great sensitivity. At that time, the situation already made him suffer deeply and, unlike the prophets of happiness who sang of the arrival of the springtime of the Church and of humanity, he spoke to the sisters in this severe language:

r teachers

The risks of ruin that are multiplying for our civilization cannot fail to move us deeply. (…) Deep down we are shaken by the tremor and fear.

(For) the world is becoming an immense and organized scandal, an ignominy, an inhuman horror…

And yet, no matter how painful and distressing we may be, let us not lack hope. (…) Our God is the one who asked Abraham to sacrifice his only begotten; our God is the one who sent us his own Son, (…) who did not defend him against betrayal, contempt and the horrible death of criminals (…). But our God is the one who raised and glorified his Christ.

The question (of the death of Christian wisdom and culture) throws me into a cruel disarray, but hope is not reached, (…) It is very painful to work on the things of time (…) when one supposes (…) that they no longer have the weight of time (of chances to succeed in time). But it is possible to work on them when one is sure that they have a weight of eternity. (…) Behold, we have become like the starving widow in the village of Zarephath; but since we still have a handful of

flour and a vial of oil and enough strength to gather a little dry wood, we will prepare a meal for our loved ones and for passing guests.

(…) Good Friday approaches and the hour of the power of darkness.

It is no longer possible for us to work except by looking at the crucifix and in the hope of the resurrection of the dead. Our work will be all the more honest, our charity will be all the more realistic; useless servants but more than ever servants.

To the one who had said Ama et fac quod vis (love and do what you want) and Diligentibus Deum omnia cooperantur in bonum eliam peccata (Everything cooperates for the good of those who love God, even sin), the Lord could ask to die in Hippo surrounded by the Vandals.

In that same month of December 1950, he commented to the sisters on the lesson of the compilations, taken from the second epistle of St. Peter: Adversarius vester diabolus, your adversary the devil surrounds you like a lion seeking whom to devour:

It is especially around your children that it prowls. Around you too, but then to numb you, to throw smoke in your eyes. The evil that the devil seeks to do to nuns is to make them lose (or prevent them from seeing) the spirit of their rule: and at that moment he makes them sleepers who, moreover, continue to observe the letter; they become sleepwalkers. The spirit of their law is to be

to be given to an evangelical work of education and teaching. In other words, to be spiritual mothers.

At that moment they will be in anguish, because they will have their eyes open to the evil that lurks in their children. As I speak, between dog and wolf, the spectacle of the streets of Toulouse… if it is not the devil who prowls, then who is it? (…) What your daughters see: the smallest advertisement for a pharmacy or a toilet, the smallest cinema poster; what your daughters read; what they hear… How many of them are protected and trained by their family to grow up? There are so few families.

(…) Today, to dress only or to dance or to admit that motherhood is normal, they need a theology because the institutions are breaking down. We are witnessing a barbarization.

Be mothers, don't be quiet. The community protects you and that's good; but if you don't redeem that protection by taking more total and real responsibility for your daughters, what's the point?

Following this, the preacher recalls the circumstances of the present time and the passivity of the "bourgeoisie". Then he concludes in a surprising way: Whatever the case, you must be mothers. You have renounced motherhood according to the flesh in order to be mothers spiritually, (I wish you much dissatisfaction, much anguish because of your daughters, so that you may be bound to them not only by bonds of love but also by bonds of pain, for there is no other way to be

It is understandable that such language, even when spoken in a tone of confidence to a few well-disposed souls, could have aroused some reticence. For among the sisters, some were sympathetic to the new developments and were more

inclined to follow the current than to go upstream. Very soon, these discordant voices would rise to the highest authorities and trigger a series of vexations against Father Calmel that would go as far as blame. But there was no point in “hiding our heads under our wings”, as he liked to say. God calls us to serve him and to strive for holiness in a precise context that is an integral part of his plan of salvation for us.

According to the Gospel

Father Calmel’s spiritual direction was not limited to Dominican teachers. By the end of the 1940s, people from all walks of life were knocking at the Dominican’s door, architects, engineers, and other professionals.

They were architects, engineers, mothers and young people. To address them, the religious found it good to formulate the principles of the spiritual life in a work which allows the reader, so to speak, to take part in the conversations of the priest with his leaders. According to the Gospel*’, composed between 1948 and 1950, is in fact much more than a commentary on a few pages of Sacred Scripture. It is the word of a master to his disciple, of a father to his child according to grace. 11 can only be well understood if it is seen as a series of personal talks that seek to educate a soul in the Christian life. 11 is a treatise, in act, of spiritual direction.

On every page, we find the pastor’s concern to raise our eyes to God through simple faith, in order to free souls from themselves and to open them to the strength and joy of charity*. It is also an energetic preaching of the necessary

participation in the Cross of the Savior. On reading this work, one guesses that to put oneself in the school of this young Dominican was not to choose the easy way. If his guidance was paternal, patient and delicate, it was strong and demanding. All the more so because he was outspoken and did not spare any sensitivities. For him, the great principles of Thomistic theology were not meant to remain in the library. They had to be put into practice in life. Grace is indeed like a light that illuminates the smallest corners of the personality, like living water that seeps in everywhere. Above all, it wants to be the soul of all our choices, of all our words, of all our works. This is not without crosses and persecution. And the second principle so dear to Father Calmcl, that of the predestination of all to contemplation, to a union with God in and through the fire of love, threw souls into a bold march towards the summits, into an ascent that was never to stop.

If your eye is simple

Beyond this general doctrine of spirituality, Father Calmel insisted on putting in writing the advice he gave to the Dominican teaching sisters of the Holy Name of Jesus. He did so in two new works written at the same time. The first one. Si ton œil est simple, was finished on July 6, 1950 in Montréjeau, but was not published until 1955: the second is entitled École t! sainteté and is dated June D'1956. The author was still a young priest, but he already had the great principles of theology and spirituality. Even today, they are very useful for a proper appreciation of the Church's mission.

81 - R..Th. Calmcl o.p,. Seton t'Évan^ie, Lcthielleux. 1952.

Father Roger-Thomas Calmel

The vocation of the Dominican teaching sisters and, more broadly, any active religious vocation, is valued.

He already sees religious life as a complex body unified and enlivened by “charity which is its soul” (p. 8), but here he emphasizes a disposition necessarily required to avoid caricatures of religious life and illusions. It is the necessary purity of the soul in the face of God. He wants religious souls to be poor in themselves, poor in the noise and threats of the world, poor in their own actions and results, poor even in their virtue.

The strong but very consoling direction that Father Calmel gave to these souls could be summed up as follows: the strength of love in an avowed poverty. But he always tried to keep them in that bonhomie, that simplicity which he had already found in Mother Hélène Jamet and in other sisters, and which was the condition of success. Far from taking themselves seriously, they had to test this famous “little good woman of common measure”, called by God to the union of love and to spiritual motherhood.

School and holiness

Is such a high ideal not illusory ï Is it not the privilege of a few privileged souls? Is the consecration to God of the Dominican teaching sisters really total? Is she not too torn between giving herself to God and working with children?

School and Holiness wants to answer these objections*’. In order to do so in a decisive manner, Father Calmel starts from the two principles which are so dear to him, that of hypostatic union and that of union of love with God. Religious life, especially active religious life, presents a multitude of aspects; the different modes of prayer, the demands of common life, the works of spiritual or material

mercy. Now all these elements are like the various members of a body. They need a principle that unifies and defines them.

See Appendix 4, page 608. The book is rcfacc in CSC dated July 6, 1950.ài icolas, prior provincial, 1 ” novcnibr

The Dominicans

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It is the belonging to the Dominican Order that gives it life and sets it in motion. “It is belonging to Christ that is the soul of our life. “The developments that will follow will aim to highlight the soul of the teaching religious life, a privileged love of God that is “source” and “root” (p. 6), and the conditions so that this life, in all its facets, can be in truth animated by charity and become the place of intimacy with God. The author invites us to “mystical realism in the accomplishment of the most humble and common tasks” of which “the Virgin of Nazareth was the definitive example”.

In this light, the objections against this type of religious life fall away by themselves. The beautiful balance of the apostolic life and the active life appear to be within the reach of all those who are called to it, and the source of an immense happiness, that of communion of love, thought and action with Christ the Savior.

Mystical realism

How can we summarize Father Calmel’s interior life at the end of his first ten years of priesthood? What is the supernatural physiognomy of his soul, as far as it is revealed through his words and writings? It can be summed up in a

short expression that appears several times in his writings, “mystical realism*”.

Father Calmel was already mystical because of the union with God that he wanted at all times and which obviously burned him like a fire of love. Little by little, he was realizing the great dream of his two-seven years of age when, reading the writings of the Abbé de Poncheville, he had felt called to “such perfect intimacy” with God who establishes “the threshold of eternal contemplation. This call was confirmed from the beginning of his religious life, as well as on the blessed day of his ordination to the priesthood.

However, this mysticism, this burning desire for intimate union with God was married to a profound realism. What does this mean? To be a realist is simply to see things as they are, and then to adapt one’s conduct to that reality. Now created things are all composed, in one way or another, of the same thing.

on the other hand, of an indeterminate and multiple principle, the “matter”, and of a determining principle which gives to this “matter” unity, activity, and even to be what it must be, it is the “form”. In the case of the spiritual life and human action, realism consists in seeing all things - virtues, passions, choices, works, institutions, speech, texts - as a multitude brought back to unity, as a body vivified and simplified by a soul, namely the supernatural song, contemplation.

This vision stands as a summit between two errors. The first consists in a kind of materialism, content with the “matter” of things; a practice without a soul, the law without the desire for holiness, the letter of Scripture without the spirit of the Church, obedience to the liturgical rubrics without the disposition to personal sacrifice. The second error is that of a certain idealism which would disregard “matter” in the name of a certain “spirit”, which would claim to unite charity, the spirit of the Gospel, to any earthly achievement; this is the tendency of certain intellectuals, of the charismatics, of supernaturalism.

Now these two errors have a name, it is death. A body without a soul is a corpse. A soul separated from the body is not in a natural state.

Moreover, to these two errors is added a third one, that which tries to unite the two elements, the “matter” and the “form”, not in a vital unity, but in an artificial juxtaposition, leaving the two parts as independent of each other. Father

Calmel never ceases to stigmatize this caricature of life, what he calls “the juxtaposition,” “the balancing act,” “the rocking game,” “the replastering,” which artificially unites action and prayer, science and faith, nature and grace, letter and spirit, the rites of the Mass and the reality of sacrifice, the means and the end, the laws and the common good. As if any “form” could be united with any “matter”. But in nature. God does not unite a human soul with the body of an ape. In all compounds of matter and form the two parts are thought of and adapted to each other, to form life and its gushing forth. To take an image, only the right hand can unite with the left hand, not the foot, to make the gesture of prayer.

In the Christian life, the “matter”, the “body” (the letter, the word, the action, the passions, the laws, an institution, the observances, the premises, the text of the prayer, the rites, etc.) are measured, intrinsically ordered to the principle that will give it life, they are modest and humble. The soul, the “form” that vivifies and ennobles the “matter” to make it a life pleasing to God, is contemplative charity. It is this whole that is called to the union with God of mysticism.

Another revealed image expresses this mysterious union of the true life, which was one of Father Calmel’s main battle horses, that of marriage. It adds to this doctrine a note of joy and fruitfulness. The profound union between nature and grace, between means and end, between reason and faith, between passions and charity, between letter and spirit, is the condition of true effectiveness and of victory in the Scriptures.

In the end, Father Calmel's "mystical realism" is only the deepening and application to concrete life of Christ's precept: "Let no man separate what God has joined together" (Mt 19:6).

It is in this spirit, that of "mystical realism", that he would approach his legislative work in collaboration with Mother Hélène Jamet,

The reform of the constitutions

As early as 1949, during the pontificate of Pius XII, several appeals from Rome invited religious congregations to adapt their lives more justly to the specific purpose of each one. It was an invitation to return to Thomistic realism. These appeals were echoed at the Assembly of Cardinals and Archbishops of France on June 5, 1949, and at the "Study Days of the Major Superiors of the Dominican Sisters on Religious Vocation" which took place in Neuilly in July 1949. Mother Hélène Jamet participated and returned confirmed in her intention to review the constitutions of her congregation.

Towards the end of October of the same year, Mother Helene gathered the community of Toulouse to make them more aware of the specificity of the congregation. She underlined the characteristics of Dominican sanctity, the famous contemplari et contemplata aliis tradere, insisting on the means of the Order, a life of prayer rooted in the liturgy, devotion to Our Lady of the Rosary, the obligation of doctrinal work. "Dominican, we will be so," she explained, "by the concern for the salvation of the souls of our students and for their formation in and through sound doctrine. "

The reception of this talk was rather cold. At the end of the meeting, Mother Hélène suggested that the volunteers go

out into the courtyard to get some fresh air while waiting for the hour of the compiles. To the somewhat embarrassed surprise of the older sisters, a young sister jumped up and exclaimed: “Me, me! “The words of the Mother General had indeed filled her with immense joy. Sister Marie-François

86 - See the Song of Songs, Psalm 44, many prophets of the Old Testament, Jii2(Cana) ctjn 3.29. Hp 5.23. *etc.*

Dupouy finally heard, formulated in a clear way, the great ideals that had decided her vocation. She could tell her superior her enthusiasm and gratitude. The two nuns would be united from then on like “two brothers in arms”, or better, like a daughter to her mother, until the death of Mother Hélène on November 21, 1982, in SaintPré.

Mother General understood that it would not be enough to inspire a more Dominican spirit in her daughters. In the name of realism, it was necessary that these great intentions which had defined the Congregation since its origins be more evident in the constitutions. They had to be taken up again, clarified, slightly corrected in order to adjust themselves more to the end and to the spirit of the institute.

In November 1951, Mother Helene gathered a General Council, composed of the councilors and all the prioresses, which unanimously decided to revise the constitutions in order to “make the profound unity of our religious life through teaching and education totally referred to Christ and the Gospel.

It was now a matter of giving form to these intuitions, the fruit of many years of experience and reflection. Having had ample time to appreciate the theological elevation and the soundness of Father Calmel’s advice, it was to him that the

Superior General turned. The Dominican accepted this new responsibility and immediately set to work in solitude and prayer at Castelneau d'Estrètefonds during the Christmas vacations of 1951.

It will be useful to follow Father Calmel in this work of a juridical nature in order to grasp the Dominican conception of religious legislation which he had made his own to a very high degree.

In reality, rather than a reform, one would speak more correctly of a revision. The first constitutions of the congregation after its affiliation to the Dominican order (1886) and composed by Father Coconnier only dated from 1903. They were only about fifty years old, which is a good age to make a somewhat thorough medical examination. Moreover, the text had already undergone some corrections in 1935, which harmonized it with the 1917 Code of Canon Law and somewhat with the recent constitutions of the Order of Friars Preachers. Father Calmel had only to follow the path traced by his elders.

Moreover, the idea of such reconciliation came from above. In September 1951, Mother Hélène went to a congress of teaching sisters in Rome. The

Pope Pius XII gave an address which only confirmed the intuition of the Superior General. She heard from the pontiff the following words

You want to serve the cause of Jesus Christ and his Church according to the needs of the present world… It is possible that certain points of the timetable, certain prescriptions

which are merely applications of the rule, certain habits which perhaps correspond to past conditions, but which at present only complicate the work of education, must be adapted to the new circumstances*.

On the other hand, the pope encouraged the adjustment of the observances of religious institutes to the spirit of the Church. It was necessary to clarify the letter of the law so that it would reflect as accurately as possible the face of the Church. It is the task of legislation, he said, “to reveal, veiled under the austere dryness of canonical formulas, the beauty, the holiness, the maternal charity of the Church in the accomplishment of her threefold function as legislator, executor and judge”; a beauty made up of “benignity, temperance, humanity, the softening of rigor, and charity”.

The Sacred Congregation of Religious itself summarized the spirit that had presided over the “modifications and additions” made to the old constitutions. The decree of approval of the new constitutions, dated September 5, 1953, states

In particular, it was good to complete them on the chapter of canonical prescriptions and the jurisprudence of the Sacred Congregation, to present them in a better literary form, and finally, to take them up again for several reasons: a slight modification in the title, the suppression of the lay sisters, a clearer determination of the apostolic work and the preparation of the sisters to carry it out.

Father Calmel had thus done a Roman and Dominican work well.

88 ■ Pius XII, Allocution aux Religieuses enseignantes, September 14, 1951 (Documentsponlificma di sa samtrté h

papi Pius XH. Editions Saint-Augustin. Saint-Maurice, Switzerland, 1951. pp. 367-374).

fcmininc! of pontifical right, Pope Pius XII renewed his appeal. This duty of “suitable adaptation to the present situation”. “We ask you to comply courageously when your sisters and your own experience tell you that the time has come to take into account intelligently the present forms of life. “In this vocational crisis^.^ see to it that the

Today it is no longer the case, and a truly good and courageous girl would find nothing but obstacles to her vocation. ” (thid.. 1952. pp. 471-475)

First of all, it was a question of highlighting the filiation of the Dominican Sisters of the Holy Name of Jesus to the Order of Saint Dominic. For this purpose, it is evident that Father Calmel was inspired by the juridical wisdom that animates the new Constitutions of the Grand Order promulgated in 1932 and that he applied them logically to the particular case of teaching nuns. The Dominican Constitutions open with “general norms” which give the fundamental principles of the Order of Friars Preachers and of its legislation. Clearly, an effort was made to define them. However, such a statement of principle was not to be found in the Constitutions of the Holy Name of Jesus of 1903 nor in those of 1935. It was decided to make room for them in 1953*’.

In their first chapter, the Dominican Constitutions deal with the foundation and the end of the Order, in order to clarify its definition. To this end, great importance is attached to

the very name of the institute, for the name expresses the definition of a thing. Now, unlike all other religious orders, the main function of the Dominicans in the Church is written in their very title. We are the “Friars Preachers”. This last term gives the specific difference of the Order. This name is august because it was imposed by Pope Innocent 111 himself, and it gives the specificity of the Order of Saint Dominic. This is the “form” that will animate all Dominican legislation and life, and give them their objective character.

Such precision was missing from the constitutions of the sisters. Those of 1903 and 1935 called them the Congregation of the Sisters of the Holy Name of Jesus of the Third Order of Saint Dominic. From 1953, they would be called “The Dominican Teaching Sisters of Toulouse”, under the vocation of the Holy Name of Jesus. Teaching would not be an “accident”, an “aside” to their consecration to God. They would in fact be spouses of Christ (Dominicans of the Holy Name of Jesus), but also mothers of souls, sent by Christ to teach young girls. Their love of God would be sufficiently eminent to be able to overflow into active mercy for souls.

In the same vein, which is that of greater philosophical precision, we will no longer speak of “primary end” (glorifying God) and “secondary end” (the instruction and education of young girls), as

in 1903, but more precisely of “general end” and “special end”. The intention is to highlight the specific difference of the Order. It is thus insisted: “Their special end, and which cannot in any way be separated from it, is to accomplish, as

religious, with regard to young girls an OEUVte of teaching and education according to the spirit of the Gospel and in conformity with the directives of the Church. “

Consequently, as every preacher preaches, every sister in the congregation teaches, in one way or another. All the members of the body are animated by the soul, all the sisters, in their consecration to God itself, are marked by the care of the children’”.

From then on, juridical wisdom will consist in achieving unity between the general end and the specific end. This harmony will be achieved, in the Order as in its subjects, by the realization, both moral and juridical, of the motto of St. Thomas Aquinas: Contemplari etcontemplataaliistradere. In order to reach the end,” say the Dominican Constitutions of 1932, “we must preach and teach from the abundance and fullness of contemplation. “This is the deliberately and constitutionally contemplative dimension of Dominican religious life and preaching.

Already the constitutions of the sisters of Father Vincens approved in 1820, and then those of 1903 and 1935 spoke of an “institute… both active and contemplative”. However, this expression left the vital union of these two lives, which should be one, in doubt. This “both” could be understood as a juxtaposition, as an alternation between union with God and the work of teaching. We know what Father Calmel thought about this. That is why the 1953 text wants to be more precise. On the one hand, it clearly states how the Church sees and has always seen this congregation: “The Dominican teaching sisters of Toulouse, under the name of the Holy Name of Jesus, form a congregation of active life with simple vows. On the other hand, it is clear how contemplation animates the whole life:

Art. 4: The spirit of the Order must be that of the congregation, that is to say, a love for souls so great that it requires an ever-growing contemplation and a keen sense of the importance and integrity of doctrine. (…) Art. 9: Their action to be fruitful among the

90-Art. 16: “In principle, all the Sisters who are received should take care of the children, even though in an unequal manner and in different ways. “Art. 17: “… Sisters may be admitted who do not

souls must flow from prayer and contemplation. In return it

must be such as to dispose them to better pray and contemplate.

In order to make this unity of life possible, the legislation gives a great role to the dispensation. From the very beginning of his Order, St. Dominic wanted dispensation to be written into the law. It is a law, not an exception. For legislation is at the service of the end and the purpose of society. If such and such an observance were to interfere with the end, the superior could dispense with it. This principle already appears clearly in the Constitutions of the sisters in 1903. Dispensation is to be used "… with prudence, discretion and for just reasons, such as when youth, extraordinary fatigue, illness of the sisters, the necessities of teaching and study, or the urgency of the work or the need for works of zeal require it. In 1953, in order to make it clear that the dispensation has as its goal the organic unity between contemplation and teaching, it is simply added: "… so that fidelity to the rule and the inevitable fluctuations of a teaching sister's life remain harmonized. "

The same principle will govern the acceptance of the postulants. They would be judged "according to the general criteria of the religious state, but also according to the requirements of the mission proper to the teaching profession. That is why, unlike in 1903, it was decided that "the postulancy would be made in a regular and fervent

house, where the work of teaching was particularly alive. (…) The postulants (…) will be able to have a certain role to play with the children, so that their vocation can already be judged” (art. 22 and 23). From the beginning, they will have to unite their consecration to God and the mercy of the truth.

- The house of Nazareth

All these prescriptions, and others of lesser importance, are clearly inspired by the spirit of the Dominican Constitutions, especially those of 1932, precisely those on which Brother Marie-Thomas Calmel had made his profession on November 1, 1937 and which he had meditated on at length. One finds in them the mark of that “mystical realism” which characterized him. Nevertheless, another preoccupation inhabited the priest and the great director of souls that he had become. The legislation he was asked to revise should not only bear the mark of the Church, nor even that of the Order of St. Dominic. These consecrated souls dedicated by Christ to teaching were not disembodied, they were not angels. And God did not want them to be men, but women. It was this other “formality” that had to be vitally integrated into the legislation. Contemplative life and teaching, already unified and simplified in the Dominican Order, are in the case

It is the union with God of consecrated virgins and a work of spiritual mercy of women. It is the vocation of the woman, with her own genius, that must animate her prayer and her works.

Beyond the details of dress or schedule, what was at stake here was the very nature of the women’s apostolate, and

especially of teaching. Those who lived under the 1935 Constitutions or who were students before 1953 testify to this. In 1903, certain customs of the Order had been taken up without discussion: the venia in public, the great office to which was sometimes added the small office of the Blessed Virgin or of the dead. This very dense timetable already had the defect of overloading the sisters responsible for the class. But that was not the worst of it. The older sisters who lived through it did not complain: “We got along well with it,” said one of them. Nevertheless, this large place given to the monastic observances entailed a danger, that of creating not only a physical but especially a moral divide between religious life and teaching. Community life, in fact, with its prayers and observances, took place, where possible, behind railings. The sisters who taught the class came out of the enclosure and returned to the community when their task was done. They were in great danger of leading two lives at once. An alumna of the Cours Sainte-Catherine in Aix summarizes the difficulty very well: “The specific end did not give form to the observances. And, in return, the religious life did not penetrate the teaching life. “

More profoundly, it was the conception of the teaching of young girls that was at stake. For, in the end, the community was conceived as a convent of preaching brothers: a bastion of prayer and study, organized around an intense liturgical life, delegated some of its members to this or that ministry, and to go out more or less frequently to preach.

This is an excellent way of looking at things and it has produced incalculable fruits of conversion and holiness in history. But it is typically masculine. It is a man’s characteristic to preach with authority,

to conform to what is practiced in times of war. When the enemy has completely ravaged the country, the lord of the

region, who sees himself pressed on all sides, withdraws to a city which he has carefully fortified; from there he occasionally attacks the enemy (…): in such a way that victory is often won, (…)Let us beg God (…) to fill the captains of this city or stronghold, that is to say, the preachers and theologians, with graces; and as most of them belong to religious orders, may he raise them very high in the prestige of their state. "(Saint Teresa of Avila, U ChemiT, de la perfection, ch. 3. Œuvres complètes. Seuil, 1949. p. 593-594)

Father Roger-Thomas Calmel

to reach the intelligences by distributing to them openly and strongly the light of truth, and then to disappear in the silence of prayer and study. But the vocation of the woman and her pedagogy are different. When he addresses the question of teaching, St. Thomas Aquinas says with great psychological finesse that women should teach familimttr et colloquendo, in a family setting and by way of exchange, as a mother speaks to her children.

It is therefore in her house, in a house of which she is the mother, that the woman makes bodies, souls and hearts grow. This is inscribed in the very constitution of the woman. In natural motherhood, the mother carries her child within her as in a nest, as in a house. She envelops it, nourishes it, protects it, warms it like a house. And this starting point determines the rest. The woman's pedagogy consists in receiving the children into her house, in introducing them little by little into the light, into the pabt, into the morals that she makes reign in her house. This is why the woman is the queen of the interior. She is conceived by God as a house, she acts in and through her house.

This applies analogously to spiritual motherhood. Qtti habitarefmt sterilem in domo, matrem filiorum laetantem, chance psalm 112. God makes the barren one dwell in the house, making her the happy mother of many sons. The pedagogy of the woman, and a fortiori of the nun, consists in receiving the children in a house, in making the children participate in prayer, in the life of study, in the work, in the charity of the house.

The former students of Holy Name of Jesus testify: “The mothers taught in class. A student from Tarbes remembers: “We liked them, but the mothers had a kind of direction. It was not the school as a whole that carried us.

It was in this sense that Father Calmel, in perfect agreement with Mother Hélène Jamet, wanted to correct the constitutions. The observances were lightened, the Divine Office was reduced to the four main hours of the Church, and the grids were abandoned where they were in force. Everything was to receive the imprint of the end, of the soul of the Dominican teaching life: the contemplation and mercy of the truth.

For the sisters, it was a question of creating a climate, a spirit, a community, a house that could receive, at the appointed times, the children of God, following the example of the house of Nazareth”.

Two years after the drafting of the constitutions, Father Calmel specified to the

You try to create a school climate in which piety is not “fake” mysticism, discipline is not a militarized order, but a school

climate in which everything happens in honor, decency, joy, a courageous and realistic charity, uniting for good to the Cross of Jesus; you try to live, as a school, in the realism of the Gospel, having in your heart the expectation of the Parousia'^.

It is "in the very title of school", it is as a house, it is in the common life that the "mystical realism" of the feminine Dominican life is realized. A few weeks before his death, Father Calmel had the joy of seeing the truth of his intuitions. In this foundation, he said, "many children enter well into the atmosphere and the framework of liturgical prayer of the house," "

- A life of study

One element of the life of the house deserves to be mentioned, insofar as it takes on a significant importance in the legislation drafted by Father Calmel, and that is study. The old constitutions prescribed that the sisters "not only teach, but study and learn, not out of vain curiosity or foolish vanity, but for the glory of God and the Church, for the honor and profit of the Congregation" (art. 334). The duty of personal study was therefore not forgotten. But Father Calmel was too

ch. 9, "The House of Nazareth," pp. 50-52.

94-l4déccmbrcl955.

95 - Sainc-Pr4, Friday before Passion Sunday, March 14, 1975.

convinced of the role of intcUigcnce in the spiritual life and in education, he saw too much the present duty of Christians

in the world, the necessity in which they found themselves to witness to the faith and to defend it, to stop there. On this point, Father Calmel was once again in agreement with the thought and experience of Mother Hélène. It was not only the individual sisters who had to study, but also the communities as a whole. Each house was to be a house of study, personal and communal.

To this end, care is to be taken that "each house" be provided with a "library maintained and increased with great care" (art. 172). From the beginning of their religious formation, and "in order to fulfill their mission well, the sisters will do all the same fundamental studies according to the program indicated, whatever the level of teaching in which they will be employed" (art. 278). It is the whole congregation which must be animated by doctrinal zeal. And this formation is to be explicitly Dominican, that is to say, inspired by Thomistic wisdom which enlightens the intelligence and leads the soul to contemplation: "All will do three years of studies under the direction of a Dominican father requested by the Mother General from the Father Provincial and approved by the Ordinary; or, in his absence, of a secular priest who recommends himself by his doctrine, spiritual life and sense of the feminine vocation. "(art. 279) This doctrinal dimension is indeed essential to the Order of St. Dominic. The latter, "to which the sisters are attached as a third order, being an order of apostles and having for its end to work for the salvation of souls through doctrine, it is here that they will draw apostolic zeal and a doctrinal formation which they will integrate in accordance with their feminine genius and their

For example, the study of science will be "enlightened by Christian philosophy" (art. 267), and the courses in the

physical and biological sciences will have to make the voice of “Christian philosophy and religion (…) heard on matter, on life and on man” (art. 268).

To acquire such a spirit, the perseverance of each one “until their death” (art. 285) is required, but above all, study will be greatly favored by common life: “The sisters will not fail to help one another in this study. The personal work of the sisters, helped by the meetings of the community, must become for them a factor of balance and unity of life. “(art. 285) For this reason, among other things, during the vacations, which are “an occasion to strengthen themselves in prayer” and when the sisters “will pay much attention to interior silence”, “a program will be established and meetings will be scheduled to allow the sisters to maintain and perfect their Christian formation; to maintain, perfect and evangelize their human culture” (art. 287) To this end. and in a very practical way. “the vacation schedule, even more than that of the school year, will be organized in such a way as to permit long hours of uninterrupted work. ” (art. 290)

The preacher was speaking from experience. In the summer of 1951, he had been invited to the session organized for a large number of sisters of the congregation at Castelneau d’Estretefonds, a village about thirty kilometers from Toulouse. Each day he preached at Mass and gave a talk, usually after Vespers, while in the morning the sisters were mostly engaged in personal work. A small fact reveals his way of working; during this session, a dozen sisters were called together to seek a definition of culture. This definition is found in article 263 of the Constitutions. Moreover, he did not hesitate to question the novices themselves: “What do you think of silence? “How do you see your fraternal life? “U called the young sisters to personal reflection in order to

give them a stronger conception of their Dominican teaching life.

- “Fearless Faith”

In the legal prescriptions concerning intellectual work, it is obvious that Father Calmel, without knowing it, was speaking about himself. He was reflecting his own ideals and way of life, his zeal for study which had never left him since the benches of the minor seminary. This is particularly evident in

to the subject (human culture). Father Calmel did not see)

in article 291. which concludes the chapter on teaching and sees the troubles of the present time as an additional reason to devote oneself to study. The Congregation is living in a time of decadence, of generalized loss of faith and of the spirit of faith, so it must take energetic and effective means to stay the course, to overcome the persecutions and the scorns which are the lot of all the children of the Church:

Since the work that the sisters have to do must be animated by the pure spirit of the Gospel, they will have contradictions as promised by Our Lord. They should not be surprised by this, but they should remain strong in their faith and love for the children, and be a leaven among the other teachers.

This militant note, inscribed in the legislative body of the Congregation of the Dominican Sisters of the Holy Name of Jesus, a faithful echo of the spirit of Saint Dominic, was indeed a trait of the character of Mother Hélène Jamet* and

of Father Calmel. In his preaching and in his writings, he constantly exhorted the sisters to be vigilant and valiant. They were daughters of the Church and had to arm themselves to bear witness to the faith in a hostile world; “In order not to cheat, one must see and admit what is true, and still walk against the world: one must resist; one must fight. “The formation that they gave to young Christian women had to be in this direction. Their work of teaching “would be in vain if it did not provide (their) daughters with the strength of resistance of a fierce honesty and a fearless faith™.” Their students, from their childhood, had to swim against the current. Is it any wonder that such language and such a call to combat were not, in 1950, to everyone’s taste? î While so many ecclesiastics and writers were announcing the springs that were blossoming, Father Calmel was giving

99 - Father Calmel, Ecclesiology and Holiness, p. 27.

Congar’s conference in the Seneschal Hall on the occasion of the week of novices, but it was clear that the congregation needed a more vigilant fornution and that the congregation that called upon him had a deeply theological and militant note.

Congar, in perfect harmony with the authorities, gave a profoundly theological and militant note to the congregation that called upon him.

l-approvalofRome

The drafting of the new constitutions was completed at the beginning of 1952. On February 18, Mother Hélène Jamet was able to announce to the whole Congregation the end of her work and that of Father Calmel. She recalled once again the spirit of her work: “These constitutions have tried to give its laws to a fully unified religious teaching life. “The Mother

General obtained permission from Rome to convene an extraordinary General Chapter to examine the text. However, some Sisters were already showing their discontent, not to their faces unfortunately, but by denunciations. They went as far as Cardinal Saliège, Archbishop of Toulouse, to tell him that “the congregation did not agree”. Faced with this muted agitation, Mother Hélène acted with the calm and prudence that characterized her. She proposed a referendum to the whole congregation. Out of 180 voters, 14 opposed the project and 165 agreed with the Superior. So we could go ahead. The Extraordinary Chapter of June 1, 1952 examined the text prepared by Father Calmel and gave full power to the Mother General to present this text to Rome. Where should we begin? Mother Hélène turned to a great canonist, Father Dulac, who helped the process considerably.

Raymond Dulac was born in Sète on October 4, 1903. He entered the French seminary in Rome in 1920 and was ordained on the same day as Father Berto (who would become a great friend of Father Calmel) on April 3, 1926. D. in philosophy and theology, and a licentiate in canon law and letters, Father Dulac collaborated with the Pensée catholique, as well as with many other reviews (including Itinéraires). He was the author of the first eighty issues of the Courrier de Rome (January 1967-January 1971). He died in Draguignan on January 18, 1987. Father Calmel and Father Dulac had an assiduous and very friendly relationship. How amusing it was,” reports a witness, “to see the two of them together, in agreement on the substance, but in such different ways. Labbé Dulac was a very distinguished and well-ordered clergyman, while Father Calmel was all spontaneity and a bit of a fantasist. They met again when Father Calmel was resting in Cotignac, while the great canonist was busy defending the Carmelites of Draguignan threatened by the federations of nuns.

® Testimony of a Dominican sister of the Holy Spirit (Pontcallcc).

from the novitiate of the Dominican Sisters of the Holy Name of Jesus, in Seilh, in po””. Toulouse, where he had met the Mother General. He made an effective contribution to the new Constitutions by playing a part in their success in Rome.

Mandated by the General Chapter, Mother Hélène Jamet and Father Calmd arrived in Rome on June 25, 1952. They immediately went to the tomb of Blessed Pius X. In prayer, they found the assurance of his heavenly support. At the very beginning of 1953, the Dominican was able to return to the Eternal City. On the day of the Epiphany, he celebrated Holy Mass at the altar of St. Pius X in St. Peter’s Basilica. On January 8, he was able to speak with Pope Pius XII in person, and to draw his attention to the Congregation of the Holy Name of Jesus

Thanks to many benefactors in heaven and on earth, and in spite of real opposition both in Rome and in the Order, the new constitutions were approved by the Congregation of Religious within a year. The decree bears the date of September 14, 1953.

10

I went to Rome

Father Calmel wrote an account of his pilgrimage to Rome which he published in La France dominicaine, a review published by the Dominican province of Toulouse for the

French Dominican tertiaries. This encounter with the Eternal City was, for the son of St. Dominic, an illumination and a profound consolation. In Rome he found confirmation of all the intuitions that had guided him in his first years of religious and priestly life, the unity of life between nature and grace, doctrinal rectitude, the call to contemplation and holiness. In Rome he placed his apostolic work at the feet of the apostles Peter and Paul, so that it might draw strength and elevation. In Rome he received strength for the battles to come.

This text constitutes an act of faith in the Roman Church. 11 reveals the interior life and the preoccupations of Father Calmel at this turning point in his life. As if from a summit, he embraces with his eyes the past and the future.

) I went to Rome for a pilgrimage of thanksgiving and supplication. I did not go alone, I was invisibly accompanied, walking and praying as the tacit delegate of all the souls who are or will be calling on my priesthood.

The Church, mystical and hierarchical

In Rome, I felt the heart of the Church beating; what I knew of the Church, I touched it, so to speak. The Church is a society, a community

11953, p. 161-164.

The Church is a society, a community of theologians, it is very interior; it is on the very interior level of the secret of hearts and of eternal life that it is established. Everything starts from there and nothing that is of hers can come from a

less profound source. Her apostolate, which she always carries out on the civilization but which is not always possible (if not invisibly), in short, all that of the Church appears outside, all that has reality and possibility of existing only because the Church is first of all interior, she is united to Jesus and she is his Spouse, the Church is holy.

And by this very fact, she is Catholic, she is the Church of all. All have a place in the Heart of Jesus, beginning with the most ignorant and sinful. “IHumimre his qui in tenebris et in timbra mortis sedent… To enlighten those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death. “The Church is visible, hierarchical, founded on the holy Apostles, the visible messenger of a definite faith and of effective sacraments; she is apostolic. And what is visible, far from opposing the mystical, only expresses it and is indispensable for its expression.

These are some of the thoughts that came to my mind with great gentleness and evidence at the tombs of St. Peter, Pius X or St. Catherine of Siena.

The Holy Church and the world

That the world is somehow mixed up with the Church, I felt it in Rome as much as elsewhere, and perhaps even more so, because in Rome this world that is mixed up with the Church gives the impression of dancing on the bodies of the martyrs and thinking of the effect it will produce by gesticulating above the catacombs. Certain sculpted or painted figures which make effects of torso or arms, the proud inscriptions on certain church pediments, all this is painful because it is worldly and hollow. This and other things, not only of art, but of life, is the world. I was not scandalized by it. What will the world do? It is judged in advance. It does not prevent the Church from being holy and apostolic. What does it matter

how burlesque it can be, even in the Holy City? 11 does not demoralize. I know that the gates of hell will not prevail. I know that the world will not prevent the Church from being pure, holy, without spot or wrinkle, that it will never discourage the Church that wants to convert it. And then, the dividing line between the Church and the world, it is not outside of us, it passes through our heart as Bishop Journet often says. This is what I thought about at St. Peter's in the Vatican, at the church of the catacomb of St. Sebastian and in many other sacred places.

The Church of the Martyrs

The Church is the Church of martyrs, of those who believe in Jesus to the point of giving their lives, who affirm before the world, at the cost of their lives, their faith in Jesus Christ who came and loved us to the point of death. And it is the Queen of Martyrs who has obtained, who never ceases to obtain for us this grace of love and witness to so many poor human beings, men and women, drawn from the same clay as us, weak and earthly like us. Never as in the catacombs of St. Sebastian and St. Callixtus had I experienced that the Church is the Church of the martyrs and the Queen of Martyrs. How everything is simplified in the catacomb, when you walk in these narrow and tepid galleries, lit from afar, lined all along with its loculi where our first brothers in faith sleep. How much simpler everything becomes when you read the inscriptions of these galleries and see that they repeat only the few elementary and imprescriptible truths of every Christian life and death: in pace, in Christo, in Deo. Likewise, the decorations invariably bring us back to the essential: the orante, the dove with the olive branch, the

basket of the Eucharistic Bread. Jonah resurrected from the whale. For our first brothers in faith, nothing stood between them and Jesus. Why shouldn't it be so with us? The Church in the catacombs was the grain of wheat that was thrown into the earth and that bears fruit in Heaven. Our first Christian brothers lived close to Jesus and for him, without worrying about hiding and being rejected by the world. They only appeared on the face of the earth and in public life to have their throats cut. And it doesn't matter, because Jesus is enough, because soon we will be with him in eternal peace, and until that day, he is the Living Bread. The most important thing is that the grain of wheat bears fruit for eternal life.

The Church and Public Life

On the other hand, if it had been possible for our first Christian brothers to act in public life, if they had not been relegated to the ground, one has the impression that they would have worked with purity, that Jesus was so much their all that they would have been able to avoid becoming of this world while working to make the structures of this world more just. The grain of wheat, if it is Christian, aspires to eternal fruitfulness; it seeks to be fruitful in the temporal world as well, but it is because of the eternal life and because of the overflow of the life of Jesus Christ. If the first Christians, if our brethren in the catacombs, had had a free place in the institutions of the Roman city, we can be sure that they would not have sought efficiency first, but the kingdom of Jesus. They were nothing like

revolutionaries of the temporal, for example, the first Russian communists exiled by the Tsars. They were converts to the eternal and the changes (revolutions, if you like) that

they would have brought about in the temporal world, if it had been possible for them, would have been nothing other than the consequence of their preference for Jesus Christ. They would have taken only means worthy of Jesus.

I understood these things better when I walked along the Via Appia Antica at daybreak; when I walked, surrounded by a silent multitude of martyrs, virgins and saints, through the catacombs of St. Sebastian and St. Calcutta. The clarity, the dignity, the purity of a Constantinian basilica like that of Santa Sabina made me better understand how when Christians come out of the catacombs and into the open, they can do so while remaining Christian as well. “Agnosce, O Christiane, dignitatem tuam! Learn, O Christian, your dignity!” Christ must remain to them as near, as immediate, as truly the Son of God as he was in the catacombs, and Christians who can say more ostensibly who Christ is must say it no less worthily. Well, the impression of Christian dignity in public life and of the absence of compromise with the world, as well as the impression of closeness to Christ no less than in the time of the persecutions, I felt it in Santa Sabina and in front of the mosaics of the apses of St. Cosimo and St. Damiano and of St. Pudentiana, and again in Santa Maria in Cosmedino; it was always the purity and the holiness of the catacombs…

Peter’s successor

In order to be the Church of martyrs and saints, of holiness in the catacombs and of holiness in public life, in order to be that and because it is that, the Church is the Church of the Pope, of the common Father, of Christ on earth. I didn’t want to go to Rome without seeing him. Exorbitant claim? No, but a filial feeling, a feeling that it is good for the least of Christ’s soldiers in the Church militant to have once, even if only briefly, looked upon the face and heard the voice of its

supreme leader, of the one from whom all its jurisdiction ultimately derives. I was moved, extremely, I was not disappointed. It seemed natural to me, although I never cease to find it prodigious, to feel in the supreme priest such goodness, a loving attention to each personal case, a habit of living very high and very close to Jesus, a self-possession in charity. It also seemed natural to me, but it never ceases to amaze me and to make me pray, to feel the supreme priest as if he were crushed and, moreover, did not care.

of this crushing, simply going along with this weight. It is clear that the supreme priest does what he commands, that it is Jesus who counts for him and the flock that Jesus has entrusted to him, and nothing else. Nothing comforts like feeling this. One touches with one's finger that "the greatness of holiness" as Bishop Journet says, is for all, including first of all those who have received the "greatness of hierarchy"; he does not put himself aside when it is a question of living in Jesus Christ, in holiness; nothing encourages like touching him with one's finger.

The Church, the mystical body of Christ

The final impression I took away from St. Peter's in the Vatican was undoubtedly that Jesus Christ, the Son of God born of Mary, is very close to his Church; much better, that this Church is one with him and that there is nothing to fear. St. Peter's in the Vatican, for me, is the confession of St. Peter, the altar of Pius X, and finally the present pope (Pius XII). The Blessed Pius X, the former parish priest who, when he became pope, renewed the tradition of holiness, urged all Christians to take communion often and from an early age,

and implacably rejected modernism. The present pope represents, in our time of apocalypse, the holiness, light and strength of Christ Jesus.

Father Calmel ended his magnificent profession of Romanity with the account of his visit to the great Dominican places in the capital of Christendom, which we have already quoted; “I felt in Rome that our Order was of Eglisc,” he said in conclusion, “that its mission was one of illumination and clarity, that we had to live and act hidden in the light, that it is by the light that we must cure the world of its horrors. “

11

Disgrace

r Calmel’s successive journeys to Rome were the starting point for a new stage in his life which would soon take on the appearance of a way of the Cross.

Against all expectations, the text of the constitutions written by Father Calmel and Mother Hélène had received a very rapid approval from the Sacred Congregation of Religious. The decree is dated August 14, 1953. Mother General received notification of it on August 27, during the study session where Father Calmel was present. After singing the first vespers of St. Augustine and before Father’s conference, she announced the news to all the sisters. Immediately, Father sang the Magnificat.

The school year was about to begin with joy and gratitude. But suddenly, the wind changed.

The next election chapter was set for May 27, 1954. A few days before, as the sisters were preparing to leave, an unexpected telegram announced to all the houses that the Chapter had been postponed. The Sacred Congregation of

Religious imposed a canonical investigation and the postponement of the elective chapter to a later date.

The extraordinary canonical visitation began in July of the same year and was carried out by Father Paul Philippe o.p., the future secretary of the Sacred Congregation of Religious and Cardinal. The Dominican visited the houses and interviewed the sisters. Obviously, he was already very well informed about the relationship of all of them with Mother Helene and Father Calmel and about their tendencies. He adapted his language according to the state of mind of the sisters, but it seemed to be

Father Roger-Thomas Calmel

The last houses were visited in September. The last houses were visited in September and the results of the canonical visit were awaited.

They arrived at the beginning of November. In a letter dated November 5, Father Marie-Joseph Nicolas, who had meanwhile been named "Assistant Religious of the Dominican Sisters of the Holy Name of Jesus," notified all the sisters of the orders from Rome. To the surprise of the majority, barely thirteen months after the approval of the constitutions, which followed very closely the directives of Pope Pius XII and of the secretary of the Congregation of Religious (Mgr Larraona), the said Congregation went back and imposed a resumption of observances which, writes Father Nicolas, "to the great majority of the sisters, were not to be respected, "The recitation of the little hours, except for special dispensations during the school year, the long prayers before and after meals, the venia, "where there will be no usual risk of being seen by children or laity", and other detailed prescriptions were to be resumed.

This coup de force, without any consultation either with the Mother General, the Chapter or Father Calmel himself, was not only aimed at the legislation of the Congregation but at a very specific person. At the end of his letter, Father Nicholas wrote: “I will not hide from you that my intention was to continue to trust Father Calmel for his courses of religious and spiritual formation which had been expressly approved by the Father Visitor. But the Sacred Congregation has judged otherwise; it finds it wiser to interrupt his ministry to you now. “The said Roman congregation expressed itself thus;

You have asked this holy dicastery if Father Calmel o.p. could keep under your control some ministry in this congregation. Without ignoring the great services he has rendered by his theological and spiritual teaching as well as by the apostolic and religious fervor he has fostered in souls, following the apostolic visitation of last June, it seems preferable for the peace of the congregation that his not sufficiently limited role come to an end.

With this measure the Sacred Congregation does not intend to approve all the complaints that had provoked the canonical visitation, most of which proved to be unfounded.

The letter signed by Father Larraona is an admission. On the one hand, she seems to see the root of the problem in the fact that Father Calmel’s ministry to the Dominican Sisters was “not limited enough”. However, at the same time, she reminds Father Nicolas that he was asking for the extension of the preaching in

The letter also reminds Father Nicolas that he was asking for the continuation of preaching in the congregation “under

your control", which meant a limitation. On the other hand, the letter points out the complaints "which had provoked the apostolic visit". The Sacred Congregation was bound to secrecy, of course, but if "most" of them "turned out to be unfounded", was there any reason left for such a radical and unappealable decision? Such a hasty judgment seemed strange, to say the least.

What were these criticisms raised against the new constitutions and against the person of Father Calmel? It could not be a defect of form. The Constitutions were not the work of a single person, but of the Superior General, of her councilors, of two General Chapters, and above all, of the Roman authorities.

On the other hand, it is understandable that some sisters felt embarrassed by the changes made to their habits, as did some priests following the reform of the breviary imposed by Pope St. Pius X, which was much more radical than that of the Dominican sisters. But if these troubles were understandable for some, could they not have been and should they not have been resolved in frankness, by opening up to the major superior or to her assistants. All the more so since the reforms brought about by the text of the constitutions did not claim infallibility. Even if approved by Rome and therefore imposed by the Church, these observances required the confirmation of experience and remained susceptible to some adjustments. In the Dominican order, legislative changes are only legally binding after the approval of three general chapters. This shows the slowness and prudence of the Dominican legislator and his sense of the terrain.

Unfortunately, they did not choose the path of frankness. They preferred to bring their complaints secretly to the

Dominican and diocesan authorities who transmitted them to Rome.

One element must have been a driving force for the few complainants, the fear of “what will people say? Some of them had indeed taken on somewhat worldly habits, especially in Toulouse. The image of the congregation was being looked after, they dreamed of great ceremonies, of fairs, of distant trips, of crowds and fame. However, the new constitutions gave the congregation a very pronounced note of modesty and poverty. One could find the mark of what Mother Hélène herself practiced. We

106 - Faced with such practices, Mother Helene had the prudence to withdraw. She proclaimed a “splicitcmcnt

recognized Father Calmel’s preaching on spiritual poverty and on “pure means”.

Linked to this last grievance, but deeper than it, was that of Father Calmel’s thinking. His worship of truth, his open opposition to modernist novelties, the deliberately doctrinal accent that the Constitutions gave to the Congregation were not in line with a certain clergy, already supported by the authorities…” There were therefore denunciations to the authorities of the Order and of the diocese: “This Dominican Father gives to the Congregation an allure that is too rigid, he changes its spirit. These are the usual slogans of subversion: we are being deceived, the authorities are changing the spirit of the institute, we are closed to the world.

On the other hand, many Dominicans in the province were not happy with the growing authority that the accused had over the sisters, who, as a result, distanced themselves from the preachers with liberal ideas. An elder tells us: “When I arrived in the congregation (1939), we could already feel the decadence. At the beginning of the 1950s, many Fathers of Saint-Maximin came to preach in Toulon or in Aix-en-Provence. We were very friendly. The fathers called upon the services of the sisters. These fathers had their value, but very quickly, we realized that we had gone too far with them. They were taking too much influence over the sisters. Some of them were already caught up in modern ideas and were in danger of influencing the young sisters who, naturally, had total confidence in the Dominican fathers. Father Calmel helped me to distinguish the true from the false and to be vigilant

For many, Father Calmel was to be discarded, with the ulterior motive that, once his disappearance was obtained, the alignment of the congregation with a “current” that was seeking itself would become easier.

It is probable that the difficulties were increased by the simplicity of Father Calmel, always very ingenuous in his relations with his brothers. 11 said that

107 - During his canonical investigation, Father Paul Philippe had criticized Father Calmel a lot in what he had said about teaching, about authors not to be read, about what one should not do.

the one and the other, it became clear to many that he did not understand the religious work and

that he thought with openness and confidence, believing a little too easily in the reciptocity of his feelings, and he sometimes let out abruptnesses which could offend delicate people. There was no lack of disputes among the Dominicans. We were at the time of the very benign sanctions against Fathers Chenu, Congar and Féret, of the project of abandoning the basilica of Saint-Maximin, of the more or less avowed opposition to Pope Pius XlI and his encyclical Humanigeneris.

In any case, the small number of complainants (fourteen sisters out of one hundred and eighty) should have alarmed the Roman authorities and inspired them to at least take the precaution of hearing the accused. But obviously, it was necessary to go quickly and to obey unacknowledged imperatives. It was necessary to listen to the voice of a current which was soon to radically upset Dominican religious life.

More circumspection would have allowed us to see that the reforms, guided by the experience of a great number of sisters, inspired by the modesty and prudence of Mother Hélène, inscribed in the text of the law by Father Calmel, had not only been duly approved by the Congregation for Religious, but were also the exact echo of the instructions of Pope Pius XII.

On May 15, 1949, the Supreme Pontiff proceeded to the canonization of Jeanne de Lestonnac. On this occasion, he showed the “very present opportunity” of a sanctity created “in the time of the so-called reform to bring to the contagion of evil and error the counterweight of a truly Christian and Catholic education”.

Leanne de Lestonnac highlights the importance of the intellectual education - natural and supernatural - of the

woman in soot of her role in society during normal life as well as among the struggles of the Church. (…) Her time is a time of deep rifts, of ruins and gigantic constructions, of apostasy and miraculous conversions, a time of formidable heresies and of sublime sanctity.

The saint therefore took seriously Jesus' instruction: "I have come to bring the sword… "(Mt 10:34) and, after an unsuccessful attempt at the cloistered life, she was moved by Providence to found a congregation of teaching nuns with a simple goal:

Augusdn.Saint-Ma'uricc.Switzerland, 1947.pp. 179-186.

Father Roger-Thomas Calmel

To give the world women who know how to hold their place as militants for the maintenance in society of faith and fidelity to God and to the Church. (For this), her daughters will have to join the contemplative life to that of instruction and education. (Furthermore), against the heresy of her time, which was determined to proscribe Mary, she wanted to give Mary children full of love and devotion and to give them Mary as their Mother.

"To give the world women who know how to hold their place as militants", such was the ideal that inhabited Mother Hélène Jamet and her daughters, and which had been so well formulated by Father Calmel. In this, they were much more Roman than their opponents.

Added to this was the fact that this mission to children had to be carried out in "new circumstances that the Church must face", said Pope Pius XII. It required a new commitment and prudence. More than ever before, it was necessary to evaluate active religious life at its true value, which is that of Christ:

The most intense external activity can be united with the riches of a rare interior life. (…) Fiery activity and concern for the interior life not only need to be united with each other, but also, at least in the esteem and desire that one has for them, they need to progress together. (…) This requirement is not only for each individual religious (…), it is also for religious orders as a whole (…). The Church urges you: let your external activity correspond to your interior life and let them constantly balance each other.

Now, to achieve an ideal rel in norre remps, Pope Pius XII was formal, it was necessary to make reforms:

In fact, most of the time, the legislators of religious institutes conceived their new foundation to fulfill functions or respond to necessities that appeared in the Church and did not suffer any delay; this is why they adapted their work to their own needs.

lificaux de sa samlei/Pope Pius XII. Editions Saint Augustin, Saint-Maurice. Switzerland. 1950, p. 58i598. The pontiff often returned to this subject, for example on the occasion of the canonization of St. Emilie de Viaiar. The latter, who, from her youth, advanced in spite of all the obstacles, was the first to be canonized.

time. If you want to follow the example of your founders, you should conform your attitude to theirs.

Especially “for the schools, for the education of the youth”, it is necessary “to respond in a new and adapted way to the new situations”,

What, then, are the character traits of the men of our time that we must take into account? They are, says the Pope, “breadth of vision in thought and reflection, unity in organization, rapidity in action. Is this not a summary of the spirit that animated the legislative work of Father Calmel? The “breadth of vision” was that of his theological wisdom: “unity in organization” is that union which he so highly esteemed between the contemplative life and the active life, between study and action, it is the unity “close in intelligence and love” according to the expression of Pius XII; the “rapidity of action” which makes one “prompt and energetic” because one is freed from the “harmful memory of perishable goods”, it is self-denial, modesty, spiritual poverty, the necessary tension toward the mystical life.

Moreover, this necessary adaptation is, for the Pope, in the direction of a more vigorous defense of the truth:

he main element of the Church’s patrimony is the Catholic faith, which we have recently defended with the encyclical Humant generis (August 12, 1950) against new dangers, guarding it with the greatest care, preserved from all blemishes, fully convinced that it possesses the most powerful forces capable of informing any era.

The insistent instructions of Pope Pius XII were animated by a spirit: realism which sees religious life above all as a body, enlivened by a supernatural love of God blossoming in the mystical life, then the strength of principles united to the flexibility of prudence, and finally the very precise sense of education which prepares children not for peace but for war. Should Father Calmel be reproached for having followed these indications which had for them not only the authority of the Pope but also the force of Tradition? For the first time, he was experiencing a divergence which was to become more pronounced later on and which made the great drama

of so many faithful: two voices were coming from Rome, two discordant voices, that of faithful, loving, conquering Tradition and that of compromise with the world.

l.Quclo

nsilglise

thanks, in large part, to the auda

What happened next was foreseeable. The General Chapter of the Dominican Sisters of the Holy Name of Jesus made Father Calmci stop teaching novices and professed sisters, as well as all preaching in the communities. For a year, the Dominican remained attached to the convent of Toulouse, rue Espinasse, and some sisters still enjoyed the freedom to confess to him. However, when they went to the chapel of the fathers, a nun, who remained in secular dress, took down their names. Marie-Joseph Nicolas and other Dominicans, complained about this license and obtained its removal.

How was Father Calmel to live this shock? Sure of having done a work of the Church and faithful to the principles of Dominican prudence, he knew how to take his bearings and remain at peace. “This impressed the Dominican novices who attended his last course on November 7, 1954,

When they arrived in the novitiate room, the young sisters saw the following sentences written on the blackboard by Father Calmel: “Farewell course” Donec transeal iniquilas.

Waiting for injustice to end (Ps.)

Frustra jacitur rete ante pedes pennatorum.

In vain are nets spread before the feet of those who have wings (Prov.)

The course focused on an article from the Constitutions of the Dominican Sisters of the Holy Name of Jesus that summed up everything: “Firm in faith and love for children” (art. 291). This is the conclusion, he told them. Overcoming the ordeal of which he was the victim, he peacefully exhorted them to “live above, beyond lies and injustice”, to avoid “wasting time in the

The greatest evil that the world can do to us is not to suffer, but to put us on its level, to make us evil if it is evil.

113 - A few years later he wrote: “The Lord has allowed this trial. I am sure that he will receive more love from it, not only from me but from the girls I had trained. It is hard in a time when real sisters and teachers are so lacking that it is some of my

because this too real scandal, I really exceeded it” (letter of July 27, 1961).

The work accomplished in the last six years was not human-sized. It was the size of God; the trial is not human-sized either. That’s why we can hold on. God is the master of the impossible, the plan continues. Against the two dangers of our life, illusion and routine, we need truth and gushing.

Keep trusting. Live the Beatitudes.

UUgerety of the soul

Under the blow that struck him, the reaction of the religious was remarkable. Far from becoming embittered, he showed a deep humility and sincere detachment. When questioned about the reasons for this disgrace, Father Calmel remained very discreet; “It’s a question of people,” he said. And he was not at all resentful of those who had hit him. Marie-Joseph Nicolas’ book on the Blessed Virgin. “L About Father Paul Philippe who had been the main instrument of his condemnation, he would write a few years later:

Yes, pray for Father Philip. For sure, with what he has given me (and others), he has been a providential opportunity for self-denial and love - and as such I bless him. But I wish (God willing) that he would come out of his unconsciousness… Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. “h Despite this rebuke, he continued his ministry faithfully, but with a seriousness increased by the trial, it seems. On the occasion of the rogations of April-May 1955, the faithful heard him preach on holiness:

Holiness consists in loving God perfectly where he wants us, assuming the responsibilities he has entrusted to us. (…) Maybe you think, this is not for me, not for me anymore, not for me yet.

(…) May you make the equivalence between a good Christian and a Christian who tends to perfect love, a Christian at all costs; between holiness and realism, between holiness and heroism, because holiness is charity, but charity in the real and pushed to heroism.

(…) This should lead you to pray without ceasing… to grow in love through your responsibilities. This is the unity of life.

ivics.” (Interview of the month of dcceiiibre 1969).

(...) To be these children of God worthy of their Father, there is only one way, one way only: to be very small. Msi effidamini. It is the only way to have enough audacity, to hope enough, to love with enough simplicity.

It is with a child’s heart that Father Calmel wanted to live and overcome the contradictions.

Moreover, his new situation gave him the opportunity to extend his apoirolat through the press. It was the review VÉcole ‘ ” which was going to take advantage of his pen and give him the opportunity to deepen the subjects that he had already approached in b Revue Thomiste.

On June 11, 1955, Father Calmel showed the readers the qualities of a Christian writer. It is not surprising that he sees them in an intimate union between “his sensitivity and his imagination as a writer” and “the Christian spirit. When he has to present evil, he will do it with “the right distance, with honesty, without insinuation or connivance”, because his “creative faculties will have been purified”.

On January 21, 1956, the father Calmel publishes an article entitled “Proposals on the philosophy of the art” ‘ After having complained about the bad taste of the station of Toulouse and the street of Metz, or of this modern church “which jumps so much with the Hotel of the xvi’ century which is contiguous to him, (....) not by the diversity of the style, but by the absence of style, or rather the counterfeit of a style”, after having praised “the spontaneous art, but rough and seizing” of “the homily of this village priest”, the

author underlines the greatness but also the danger of the att. For, “at the same time that we experience literary beauty, we are morally solicited by the beauty of moral rectitude and holiness, or by the seduction of the devil and of a damned life”. Even more than 11 painting, poetry is all the more “redoubtable, that it threatens the most our freedom for our salvation or for our loss”.

A certain pain appears in the article of March 17, 1956 on “Victor Hugo’s religion”. Father Calmel deals with the problem of sacrilege

116 - L’École, a bi-monthly pedagogical review. 11 rue de Sèvres. Paris VP. Father Calmel collaborated in an article in the June 1955 issue entitled “L’ordre du savoir dans l’école chrétienne do

in the Church, and of the support that can come to us from men of the Church. How can one not think of one’s own case when reading these lines: because they accept to suffer not only from the world enemy of the Church, but also from some of their brothers in the Church. Lbrdre lasts because they accept the cross. (…) There are always children of the Church who love the cross that comes to them at the same time from those outside and from their brothers within, (…) The Church is a crucified order - the Church of an order willed with enough love to want the cross.

On May 12 of the same year, a “Note sur l’Ève de Péguy” was published in which the deep motive of Father Calmel’s enthusiasm for the great writer who died in the first weeks of the 1914 war is revealed; beyond the creative spirit of

Péguy, it is the union between the temporal and the eternal. The Eve of Péguy is more than a simple poetry, it is

a contemplation that embraces in a single glance our hovels of exile and their poor honors and the house of Heaven that Jesus opened for us and to which the Blessed Virgin leads the exiled children of the first mother.

In the number of September 29, 1956, Biaise de Neufchâtel takes again his “Propos de philosophie de l’art”, and underlines again the determining role of the artistic inspiration. Because, “if the work, whatever it is, - is novel or poem, thatched cottage or cathedral, mosaic or stained glass -, does not proceed of the creative sources of the artist, it is deprived of life and of true beauty”.

These reflections on the philosophy of art end with a last article, on October 13, 1956. The author renews there his warning. It is a great thing that a work of art, because “the things said by the writers or represented by the artists are torn by the fact even to the insignificance and to the banality and take suddenly a spiritual intensity and an evocative force which makes them formidable”, for the best or for the worst. In the field which is his, that of the Belles-lettres, he shows a certain optimism, because a healthy reaction against the modern bad taste was born:

There are now in France very great works which were “composed in a state of grace” and which give a magnetic testimony of what represents the destiny of man in conspectu /esu Christi.

Just recently, in this very journal, Jacques Vier cited the work of Léon Bloy as a model. The work of Péguy and, in part, that of Bernanos, are no less exemplary. It is a fact: there are

Father Roger-Thomas Calmel

It is a fact: there are some writers whom we must agree to designate by the name which is rightfully theirs of contemporary Christian classics.

Father Calmel therefore expected from these authors, whose limits he recognized, the profoundly Christian inspiration that allowed him to enter into the mystery of things, of man and of God, that allowed him to guess the intimate and vital union of nature and grace. On December 28, 1957, he expresses his thoughts on Bernanos, still in the review L'École, by an article entitled "b vérité du Journal d'un curé de campagne". He does not hesitate to show "the false notes", while insisting on what seems to him to be the great quality of the work, the right expression of the problem of the fidelity of each one to grace.

The weight of the cross

The preacher brother thus generously continued his apostolic ministry. However, even if he applied himself to live sutnaturally risolcmem forced in which he found himself, the ordeal was nevertheless a very hard blow for him. A few years after these events, he wrote a letter to Father Chenu on a completely different subject (letter not sent), in which he alluded to his ordeal:

Excuse me for saying this. I am venturing to do so because the record of denunciations against me is not too thin; and these records usually have consequences. His weak physical constitution felt the repercussions of this moral shock. From November 1954 onwards, he suffered from serious heart ailments. On December 12, 1954, he wrote a letter of particular gravity, a kind of testament that shows the nobility of his heart:

I don’t know if I should attach any importance to the heart ailments I have been suffering from for the past month and a half, I hope not. In any case, I take this opportunity to declare that I hand my life over to Our Lord, through the hands of Our Lady, so that he may take it when and as he pleases. I only ask that my death be worthy of a priest. I thank him for everything, especially for the suffering. I ask his forgiveness for not having lived up to my priestly grace.

To all those whom I have offended I ask forgiveness, I only wish to tell them that I do not find that I have ever brought any

1962, p. 125-126) and on Charles Péguy (///“mzIran” 169, January 1973. p. 68-69)’

of malice nor of calculation in the harm I may have done to them. Of course, to all those who have offended me - in any way whatsoever - I forgive without difficulty; and I ask God, and Father of Our Lord Jesus Christ, to have mercy on them.

I will not speak here of my friendships which have never failed me, and which have helped me in an incomparably free and gratuitous way; because all this is an ineffable secret.

All the papers and notes that I can leave, I want them to be given to Mother Hélène (Claire-Marie) Jamet because she is the one who is best able to understand and correct them; many of these papers are not in their final form. She will dispose of them as she wishes.

Then he let the very special pain that came from his Order express itself

If I cannot thank the Lord enough for having called me into the Order of St. Dominic, I cannot help but suffer, and suffer greatly, that it is not an Order of priests and an Order of truth. (I deplore the part I play in this miserable state of affairs). In order that this may change and that the Order may become worthy of its Father, I give my life to Our Lord as it pleases Him. Obviously I give it, in the same way, for the teaching sisters of Toulouse, so that they may be what their constitutions say, notably in articles 4 and 351d'", and that the Order may have the nobility to recognize them as such.

In manus tuas Domine commendo spiritum meum.

Ave Maris Stella.

Veritas liberabit vos.

the Order must be that of the congregation… "(art. 4) So that "the congregation passes on the raUon of being of the Third Order" (art. 35 Id).

12

Spain

Father Calmel's situation in Toulouse was becoming difficult. The growing moral isolation in which he found himself in his community, the vagueness which still reigned over his relations with the Dominican teaching sisters whose house was next to the convent of the Dominican fathers, the prodigious advance of new ideas in the Church of France and in the Order, all contributed to create a malaise around Father Calmel. Nevertheless, he bore this heavy ordeal as lightly as possible before God. In the uncertainty of the future, he transcribed these verses of Péguy;

And as we do not know when a year is beautiful what we like best, if it is the sleet or if it is the return of the black swallow or if it is the network of unrolled sorrows…

In a beautiful life there are only beautiful days In a beautiful life there is always good weather…

So God does not know among so many beautiful days What he loves best, if it is sweet childhood And if it is modest and simple obedience Or the gratuity of perfect loves

It was indeed a hailstorm that awaited the preacher brother. In October of that same year, he received from Father Vincent de Paul Rande the news of his transfer. He was to leave for the Dominican convent of Nuestra Senora de Atocha, in Madrid, “for reasons of study and ministry.

121-Notcdu lOi

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The sweet Spain

Abruptly sent to an unknown land, rejected by his brothers, unable to fight the good fight for which Providence seemed to have destined him, Father Calmel, a very sensitive and delicate man, could not help but feel a deep pain. A certain bitterness appears in this text that he wrote for himself a few weeks after his arrival:

Everything I say that sounds very prophetic or very revolutionary is not very worrying, it is not said in the tone of Lamennais. If I dream of a papacy of evangelical style or of a Christian Europe, or of holiness in the temporal, or of a Dominican order finally returned to the truth, I do not dream of anything else but this; that each one strives to go to the end of his grace. For me, my present grace is to be in exile, to let pass the ideas that want to pass, to be close enough to God not to spoil them when I give them expression.

The only thing is to pray not to fall into imbecility. It only takes a little to fall into imbecility. If the Order of St. Dominic, for example, became so heavy and so distant from the poor world and its problems, it did not happen by itself.

The understandable pain of such a human heart would find in Spain a salutary balm.

In his childhood, the future Father Calmel had already had a foretaste of the Spanish spirit through a companion of the minor seminary of BonEncontre, Father Salazar’”. As soon as

he arrived in Madrid, he was seized by this “magnificent and infinitely kind Spain” which did him so much good and which he would praise on his return. Later, when he gave advice to Latin teachers, he would allude to his enthusiasm for the Spanish language and culture. “To the extent that Latin teachers have felt Latin, have been truly enchanted by Latin (as they were by Greek or Spanish), they will pass on grammar at the same time as they bring people into communion with Greco-Latin antiquity. Y a Espaiia de hoyi Pero como sepueda ensenar alguna cosa sin haber sido encantado de esta?

122 - Abbot Salazar had to take refuge in France at the beginning of the communi^c revolution. He passed

Spain

At the beginning of December he was invited to visit the famous museum of Mailrid. A smile of Providence awaited him there, in the form of a small statue of Our Lady of the fifteenth century, known as the “French Virgin”, twenty centimeters high. It touched the French Dominican who explained the reason for it to him.

Our Lady holds the globe and presents it to Jesus who caresses it. One has the impression that the Child-God has handed over the empire of the world to his Mother and that he is not worried about anything; he simply enjoys caressing the globe of the earth that the Virgin Mary offers him.

This is how the Savior governs the world: he places a care,sse of peace on our poor planet which he has placed in the hands of the Virgin Queen. Of course, it is a pabc that rises beyond the night of Good Friday; but the pabt of his birth gives us the infallible presentiment

Liturgical life

However, it is especially in his liturgical piety that the Dominican will find peace and sweetness of soul,

The Gospel of the second Sunday after the Epiphany, the story of the wedding at Cana, gave him these reflections which express so well the delicacy of his soul and his disposition to follow Christ:

May we experience all the tenderness, the graceful and singing victory, in this first miracle of Jesus that leads him to Calvary and the Resurrection. The day is near when he will make all things new. Until then, do not sleep. Let this not be an excuse to sleep

Every day, in the celebration of Holy Mass and the Divine Office, the Brother Preacher would find the source of peace and inner renewal. It is there that he would draw love, fidelity, silence and the sweetness of union with Christ. On December 7, 1956, Father Calmel composed a text

125 - Father Calmel, December 10, 1956.

127 - Seven years later he wrote: “Especially since Spain (since 1956), I have understood better that the great help, the great peace, in the absurdity and wickedness of this world, is the s.icrificc of the

to combine the cunning and wicked man, the lord Lucifer who prowls through the world and who can count on the most unexpected and faithful devotions. In the psalms, it is finally a question of a real Christian life sung by a very great poet in tune with heaven. (…) The Bride of Christ knows perfectly well what to say to the Bridegroom and knows what tone to say: the tone of love, of exile and of certainty,

(…) At least for me, the psalms represent a high point of prayer and poetry, but one cannot stay there for very long.

The vibration is too high-pitched. The wind chill that hits your face is too startling and relentless. Five or sbc of these songs said in a row are enough for my prayer, at least if I say them at the level they were pronounced. (…) Such is the vehemence of the psalms, it is understandable that their sincere recitation cannot be sustained for long. But it is also understandable that their sincere recitation can literally recreate our soul.

The Spanish

The prayer of the Rosary seems to me to be in harmony with the prayer that Jesus himself makes in us at the moment of communion. The prayer of the psalms also brings us to that zone of silence, of light, of intimacy, which is our true good and from which we should not stray.

(…) To which psalms do you particularly refer? All of them have spoken to me and still speak to me; there is not one that has not helped me and continues to help me.

This text is precious for getting an idea of the interior life of Father Calmel at the very beginning of his “exile” in Spain. The psalms “prayed by themselves” in his heart and formed the basis of his prayer, giving it the right note, “the tone of love, of exile and of certainty”. They were a providential means of avoiding withdrawal and sadness, and allowed him, on the contrary, to “re-make himself” daily in Christ. They are a providential way to avoid withdrawal and sadness, and allow him, on the contrary, to “re-make himself” daily in Christ. He thus reaches the deepest sanctuary of the soul, “that zone of silence, of light, of intimacy, which is our true good”.

Through liturgical prayer, he was prepared to receive a higher light, that of the Spanish mystic.

Christmas was approaching when Father Calmel went to Avila. He already knew the great Spanish saint from his writings. What a joy it was for him to discover the arid countryside, to follow the steep road up to the city and to enter the gates of the city. There, in one of the alleys, the good Lord had a Christmas present for his servant. One of his acquaintances from France who was there recognized the French Dominican and called him from behind. The man led him to the little chapel where St. Therese had received the grace of transverbatio. Father Calmel was able to celebrate Mass there on Christmas Eve, with a chalice in which St. John of the Cross had consecrated the precious blood.

The next day, the Father was received by the superior of the Carmelite nuns of San José, who spoke to him in a manner worthy of her great Order. She encouraged the exiled Dominican with great kindness, speaking of the persecution of the poor as something common and not very important. What is important," he would later explain, "is the welcome that our soul gives to these persecutions, as, in general, to all the trials sent by the Lord. "He was touched by this delicate Christmas grace, which he summarized as follows:

Saint Teresa, for me, is the magnificent Spain of infinite kindness; above all, she is the love that takes hold of the soul and preserves it from complicating things; moreover, she delivers from complications.

Until the end of his life, he will have on his work table the famous advice of Saint Teresa of Avila:

Nada le liirbe,

Bios m se muda.

Peace todo lo alcanza. Quien a Bios tiene, nada le /alla.

Solo Bios basla.

Let nothing disturb you, let nothing frighten you.

God does not change.

Patience obtains everything. To him who possesses God, nothing is lacking.

God alone is enough.

Spain, the land of great mystics, will leave a deep impression on Father Calmel's soul. In this forced retreat, he meditated on the life and deepened the doctrine of St. John of the Cross and St. Teresa of Avila, of whom he would become a convinced apostle to souls. At their school, he understood more fully the role of the cross in the long work of our union with God. At the beginning of January, he wrote: Lord, I believe in your reign in the Church, and that it is your reign

But, Lord, it is true that it is a crucified kingdom.

But a reign of smiles and freedom. I'm sure of that.

(…) In any case, it is not in any way that the kingdom of God is at work in the anarchies or kingdoms of this world. It is in a crucified way.

And I believe in the consummation of the kingdom in eternity. That eternity that has nothing in common with all that the preachers of the good death and the

announcements of the edifying deaths tell me. It will be so much simpler. You will be where you were. Who was in you through the cross will be in you forever without the cross, but with the love that was purified through the cross.

(…) It is good that I learn to suffer for as long as it pleases the King of Justice in order to obtain that more justice comes.

Queen of mercy, remember that I am so little in the kingdom of God

In the ordeal of the moment, Father Calmel applied himself to see the finger of God and the promised Heaven. At the school of the great Spanish Carmelite, he will make of the

the cross as the door to love. Two verses of St. John of the Cross translate very well the interior life of the French Dominican;

I desire neither suffering nor death, yet I love them both, but it is love alone that attracts me.

(…) I have no other office than now, because now everything

Dominican life

Father Calmel was not only interested in Spanish history, but also in the present, beginning with the cloisters of the Order of St. Dominic, which he got to know during his preaching (Madrid, Segovia, Salamanca, where he preached during Holy Week). The Dominican province was full of religious who were eminent for their piety and doctrinal zeal.

Thomistic studies were flourishing and gave the Order great prestige.

The most representative figure of the Spanish Dominicans of that time was without a doubt Father Santiago Maria Ramirez. Born on July 25, 1891 in the region of Burgos, he entered the seminary of Logrono in 1908. At the end of his philosophy, like Father Calmel, he entered the Dominican order. He began his theological studies in the convent of San Esteban in Salamanca, ^mi^Angelkum in Rome. Ordained a priest on July 16, 1916, he was appointed professor of philosophy in XAngelicum (1917-1920), then of theology in Salamanca (1920-1923). He continued his teaching career at the University of Fribourg (Switzerland) where he remained until 1945. From 1947 to 1965 he was Regent of Studies of the Dominican Province of Spain and President of the Faculty of Theology in Salamanca.

It was there that Father Calmel made the acquaintance of this great theologian who contributed powerfully to giving his province a profoundly Thomistic religious and doctrinal life, combining study and contemplation:

130-Saint John of the Cross, Cantique spirUuel,%26 ■ 1%.

(1891-1967). publication of the convent of San Esteban of Salamanca, 1968.

The prudence of leadership requires two complementary virtues: magnanimity and magnificence.

The magnanimous is a broad, generous spirit. He looks problems in the face. He holds his resolution with an open

heart and indomitable energy, constantly looking to the common good. He is not seduced by applause or intrigue.

11 is not self-serving, but generous,

he is not vengeful, but merciful,

he is not envious, but charitable,

He is not talkative, but rather taciturn and always affable,

it is not rushed, but calm and orderly.

But above all, note that he is humble. Magnanimity and humility are not opposites. On the contrary, humility is the basis of it. The magnanimous must begin by being humble. Magnus esse vis, a minimo incipe (St. Augustine): To more humility, more magnanimity. The magnanimous person aspires to a gigantic humility. He is not satisfied with any kind of humility.

The heroic strength of the magnanimous comes from God. God gives his grace to the humble. The more humility, the more grace from God. To more grace from God, more supernatural energy. To more energy, greater magnanimity, “I can do all things in him who strengthens me” (St. Paul).

One can understand how such language, authentically Thomistic, could be a consolation and an encouragement for Father Calmel. He found, among his Spanish brothers, the Dominican wisdom and vigor that he had seen decline in the province of Toulouse for some years.

However, the theological and supernatural pedagogy of these eminent Dominicans sometimes gave him the unpleasant impression of a certain supernaturalism. Passionate as he was about “mystical realism”, Father

Calmel was not satisfied with a Christian life where it was only a question of faith and prayer. He wanted to see the great truths of the Gospel incarnated in everyday life, or, to put it better, animating all the thoughts, choices, feelings and duties of the present moment. He knew too well how a

reality of duty and combat. From the beginning of January 1957, he was able to

How to tell the Spaniards that the sober natural is not only above the "temporal", it is inside, and if it is not inside, it is to

This reflection was all the more relevant because the savage religious persecution of 1931-1939 was still present in people's memories and left deep wounds in their hearts. Twenty years after the counter-revolution, there was a danger of wanting to blow off steam, of resting in a certain irenicism, of not seeing through the window the enemy that had been chased through the door.

The Spanish War

Ugiierra miestra had manifested the greatness of soul and faith of Catholic Spain. After long years of systematic persecution, the Christian people had risen to defend their altars and homes.

It all began with the electoral fraud that gave power to the left in 1931. Since then, the government fomented an increasingly anti-Catholic climate. The numerous burnings of churches and convents in May 1931, and the murders of priests and religious in Asturias from October 5, 1934, were

encouraged and not repressed by the politicians. From 1934 on, the national press encouraged civil war against the Church as a path to revolution. As a result of this pressure on public opinion, the Popular Front extremists triumphed in the February 1936 elections. Without a carder, they established a totalitarianism that excluded from all power the most numerous Spanish political organization, the C.E.D. A.

Inspired by Freemasonry, the legislation of the republic became more and more antiChristian, at the same time as the people were indoctrinated with defamatory campaigns against the Church. From July 18, 1936, the Church no longer had a legal existence in Republican territory. Therefore, it had to organize itself in the underground.

At the same time, systematic persecution was carried out by militants of extremist parties and trade unions, encouraged and guided by revolutionary policies.

From 1937 onwards, a thousand churches and convents were burned and looted, with many desecrations of the holy species, and 6,500 clergymen were murdered (on average 40% of the clergy in the devastated dioceses, but up to 80% in some), thus creating a real climate of terror. Such was

This was the reason for the open letter from the bishops of Spain to the episcopate of the whole world in 1937, to counteract international disinformation.

By 1937, twenty thousand churches had been destroyed or completely destroyed. In all, the Spanish revolution, supported and armed by Soviet Russia, murdered, usually

after the most painful and humiliating tortures, thirteen bishops, that is, all those who remained in the Republican zone, seven thousand nine hundred and thirty-seven priests and religious. Tens of thousands of lay people (about 80,000) were tortured and put to death for the sole reason of belonging to the Catholic Church.

Twenty years later, these feats remained marked on the walls and especially in the minds. And the foreign priest could not but admire the strength of the martyrs, the determination of the counter-revolutionaries, the uprising of the Catholics against the conspiracy of which they were the victim. Visiting Toledo, he could see the place of the superhuman resistance of the Cadets of the Alcazar, an immortal lesson to all those who must defend God and country against the maneuvers of the prince of this world.

The example was striking, in fact, and Father Calmel drew from it lessons on the laws of the Church's struggle on this poor earth. Above all, with the spirit of faith that we know him for, he saw in it a confirmation of the eternal principle expressed by Tertullian: Sanguis martyrum, semen christianorum, the blood of martyrs is the seed of Christians. The Dominicans, in fact, had not been spared by the cruelty of the communists. They had the honor of giving Spain and the Church one hundred and thirty-two martyrs (out of the 2,365 religious murdered). Clearly impressed by the sanctity of his brothers in religion, he would later affirm;

As I am sure that my abrupt entry into the Order at the end of the summer of '36 was the fruit of the martyrdom of some unknown Spanish Dominican, martyred by the reds of the summer of '36

The consoling dogma of the communion of saints overcomes mountains!

2004 (first edition; 1961). ^

136’LcpcrcCdmct “cxpriiTHunjourlcrcgrc[dcn’avoirpupartagcrIcsortdcsCadctsd crAlcuu>’ May 3, 1985). ^

ai 1971.

Spain

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France seen from the outside

When the farmer leaves his farm, moves away from his farm and climbs the mountain, he sees his domain in a completely different way, he discovers its place in the vast valley and its limits. In the same way, Father Calmel’s exile in Spain was an opportunity for him to see France in a different light. Contemporary history reminded the visitor of the misdeeds of the French revolution in his neighboring country, and the son of Ftance was bruised.

The devastating Napoleonic and revolutionary wars had already left their mark on politics and monuments. And since then, apostate France had not ceased to spill its immorality and philosophical errors beyond the Pyrenees. Father Calmel’s pain is reflected in the lines he sent to a woman too enthusiastic about politics

You believe. Miss, that one does not feel a wound in the heart when, buying (a newspaper) at a kiosk of the Puerta del sol in Madrid, one hears murmuring behind one’s back: “What disgusting magazines are exposed this morning, naturally, they come from France”? Do you think that you are not upset when, while meditating in Batalha in front of the tomb of a Portuguese infant, you are disturbed by the

comment of the guide who explains to you why this tomb is all destroyed: “It was violated on the orders of such general, officer of Napoleon Bonaparte”?

Official France has been poisoning the world since the great revolution.

) I do not say that France as a country has apostasized, but I do say that for almost two centuries, France has been striving to achieve apostasy and that it is not far from succeeding in doing so

However, the support of a certain France for the revolution was accentuated during the religious persecution of 1931-1939. The Popular Front

helped in a more or less official way the red government, while any help, even medical, was systematically refused to the “rebel” troops (those of Franco). Entire trains of explosives left the pyrotechnic plant in Bourges for Barcelona, while individual shipments of medicines to the nationals were diverted to the red zone as soon as they arrived in Bordeaux. The commitments of the French military in the Republican ranks were openly favored and the Minister of the Air sold to

reds all kinds of aircraft, some of which, of excellent quality, were to be cruelly lacking in 1939. (…) In all, France supplied 480 military aircraft throughout the civil war, (…) and delivered whole trains loaded with war material

The sympathy of the socialists for the revolutionaries is not surprising, Pim painful is the observation of the support of some Catholics franpti

Emmanuel Mounier, in his review Esprit, saw in the antirt ligious violence of the reds the logical consequence of the ecclesiastical policy and of the support of the clergy to the military uprising. According to him, the Spanish Church reaped what it had sown; for having approved the social injustice, it underwent the anger of the victims; the troubles in Spain were only a social guem, the uprising, too violent perhaps but legitimate, of the poor against the rich.

These partisan positions of the Catholics of the left hardly surprised Father Calmel. On the other hand, he was much more sensitive to the attinul! of a good number of his brothers, French Dominicans, who denied to the Catholic reactioi the dignity of a holy war for the defense of religion.

Georges Bernanos himself, whom he greatly appreciated for the vigor and originality of his thought and for having introduced grace into the novel, was considered a traitor by the Spanish Catholics. After having been, at the beginning, an enthusiastic defender of the Nationals, among whom his own son was militant, the French writer put all his literary ardor to fight against them following the terrible fights of the Mallorca Island. But it has been clearly proved that his passionate reaction was based only on false testimonies and on historical errors".

Without a doubt, Jacques Maritain's position was the one that most affected Calmel. In Spain, the latter discovered another aspect of the one that had excited his 17 years.

Since the beginning of the Action Française, Jacques Maritain had been trying to unite the strictest orthodoxy with the feeling of modern freedom. He found in the Spanish war the opportunity to put his principle into practice. Rather than

139 - Marcelo Gaya y Dclruc, cil4 in the Bulletin des amis de Saint Franfois de Sales n” 101. fevrin140-Emmanuel Mounier, ” Spain, sign of contradiction “. Esprit, 1 *’ October] 936.

to condemn one or the other of the parties in conflict, it was necessary to seek to solve the problem by freedom, by the way of diplomacy. The philosopher collaborated in the foundation and was 1 ame of the Committee for the civil peace. According to him, the Church had to assume the role of mediator between the two antagonists.

Above all, Jacques Maritain was the spokesman for those who, like Emmanuel Mounier, denied that the Spanish War had any religious character. As early as 1937, he wrote a fourteen-page work in Spanish entitled: Les Rebelles espagnols nefont pas une guerre sainte ‘■‘É In French, Maritain published his reflections first in the Nouvelle revuefrançaise, and then in his prologue to the book by a Spanish Catholic, Alfredo Mendizâbal Villalba We cannot speak here of a holy war, he says, but of a war of extermination that can only be resolved through negotiations. The author sends the two belligerents back to back, in the name of freedom and the absolute right to life: It is horrible, sacrilegious to kill priests - even if they are fascists, they are ministers of Christ - in hate of religion. But also, it is sacrilege, it is horrible to kill poor people - even if they are Marxists, they are the people of Christ - in the name of religion

This is what was called thinking the philosophy of history in the light of Christianity!

The intervention of the famous Catholic philosopher had a great resonance throughout the world, especially since it appeared at the same time as the Spanish bishops published their open letter. Maritain appeared to the Spanish Catholics as the worst of traitors.

This was a far cry from the close collaboration that Father Calmel desired between the two countries of ancient Christianity. Above all, the events of the Spanish War, the destructive reaction of French Catholic intellectuals and the present situation of the country led him to meditate on the doctrinal principles of a Christian temporal order and of the counter-revolutionary struggle.

U will write the following year his admiration for Spain:

Faced with the attempted Marxization of their country in 1936, the first attitude of many Spanish Christians was to rise up and defend, even at the cost of their lives, their basic and fundamental political right to practice their religion. This reaction was very normal and

142. Los robddes espafsoles no bacen unagnerra santa, Madrid-Valcncia, Ediciones Espanolas, 19.37. \^i-diixorigmesd’nneSriigétiie:IapoiUiqHeesp,sgnolede I92S à /93& Dcsclée de Brouwer, Paris. 19,37. 144. Translation from Spanish by us.

it is the first that is necessary. However, there is a second reaction, also normal, which should double this one, which in fact doubles it in a great number of Christians in Spain: to ask oneself if the boldness and progress of evil are not due in part to the sluggishness and numbness of good; if the answer is affirmative, to take advantage of this sad occasion to become more ardent and more active in the good, {…) On the other hand, it is evident that even if the Christians of a country in the hour of their persecution must, in certain cases, think of beating their breasts and making amends, they must first think of taking the means to continue to exist. It is good to make amends, and it is necessary; but it is still necessary to exist. It is not by allowing themselves to be reduced to nothing politically that the Christians of a country will have any chance of bearing witness to the Gospel in public life

loWfî, NEL. I960 (written in 1958). p. 1

13

The Sainte-Baume

Father Calmel’s exile was a providential enrichment for him. His soul had drunk from the most beautiful springs of Catholic mysticism, his heart had been purified by the ordeal, his tender and filial piety for Saint Dominic had been dilated by contact with the country where he had been born, his judgment on thirst and on the revolution had been clarified, his zeal to serve and to defend the Church had been strengthened, all his intuitions had been confirmed. He

returned to France, by order of his superiors, with a renewed love for God and for souls.

Where was he going to exercise his new ministry? One remembers the reason for his departure from Toulouse. He was still under the ban which deprived him of his ministry with the Dominican teaching sisters of the Holy Name of Jesus. It was therefore necessary to place him in towns where the sisters had no schools.

It was to the Sainte-Baume, first of all, that Father Calmel was sent. Sainte-Marie-Madeleine no doubt remembered that the preacher had dedicated his first articles to her in La Vie Dominicaine in May 1946. She now welcomed him fraternally in her Provençal retreat.

Ledicès deM"' Calmel

Father Calmel's return to France was overshadowed by the death of his mother, M" Héloïse Calmel. In poor health and always suffering from heart disease, M"" Calmel died suddenly, at the age of 65, on November 12, 1957. In a much later letter, M. Matthieu reminded his son of the circumstances of this departure;

She had prepared dinner. We all had dinner at the family table. I went to sow the furrows, they are about 400 meters long. From there I could see very well the surroundings of the village. I saw 2 or 3 times the herd alone. I thought to myself: something bad has happened. I left immediately and found poor Heloise fallen on the path. I called Mary who had just buried her husband four days ago, and she came. But we carried her to her bed. She looked at me one last time. I

had sent for the parish priest and Dr. Fauvel… but they all said she was dead. Poor Heloise, I still pray for her a lot. From Heaven she prays for us too, and one day we will all meet again as before to praise God for having loved us so much.

On the funeral memento, Father Calmel had this beautiful prayer inscribed: We give you thanks. Lord, holy Father, through Jesus Christ our Lord, for it is he who has made the hope of the blessed Resurrection shine for us.

Our Lady of Compassion, pray for us.

Always willing to raise his gaze to eternal realities, he wrote down what was then the basis of his contemplation. Heaven, he said, is: A place where one dwells completely with God, with all oneself and all the time, because one finally sees him and because he has taken us with him forever in and through his redeeming Son. A place where the body will no longer hurt, no longer feel pain, no longer be subject to eating and sleeping. A place where all faces will be transparent; where one will see what each one thinks and that he thinks only good. Even if you don't always talk to everyone, you won't meet anyone who is indifferent and you won't be indifferent to anyone. A place where we will always speak to the Lord and always as we should; where we will always speak as we should for all those we have left behind. There will be nothing in us that will oppose God, that will pull down or away. We will have become fully free from this earth and yet apostolic charity will be infinitely more burning than ever before on earth; but it will be carefree; we will see all the evil without crying, because we will see God, because we will be with the risen Christ and share in his victory.

The Sainte-Baume

Without delay, it was necessary to go to its new destination.

The Sainte-Baume 1 13

Carved out by the waters in the formidable cliff of the mountain range that bears its name, the Sainte-Baume (from the Provençal Santa Baumo, the holy cave) has been under the care of the Dominicans since the end of the 13th century. It was there, according to the oldest traditions, that Saint Mary Magdalene spent the last years of her life. During the violent persecution of the year 42, Larate, Martha, Mary Magdalene, Mary Jacobé and Mary Salomé, together with Maximin, one of the seventy-two disciples, and Sidonius, the blind man, were taken to the port of Jaffa and thrown into a boat at the mercy of the waves. They landed safely near the mouth of the Rhone, at a place that has since been called Les Saintes-Maries-de-la-Mer. There, they separated. Lazarus went to Marseilles, Martha to Tarascon, Maximin to Aix and Mary Magdalene chose the extreme solitude of the Sainte-Baume to devote herself to penance and contemplation.

The oldest historical documents and the most recent discoveries converge to attest the presence of Saint Mary Magdalene in what has become one of the most important places in Provence. In the fourth century, the sarcophagi in the crypt of Saint-Maximin prove the presence of the relics of Saint Mary Magdalene. The lid of the white marble sarcophagus that contained her remains recalls the episodes of the saint's life. As early as 415, Cassianite monks from the abbey of Saint-Victor of Marseille (founded in 408) came to settle in Saint-Maximin and the Sainte-Baume. This testifies to a much earlier cult of the penitent saint. In the 6th century, the ancient Life of Saint Mary Magdalene, reproduced by several hagiographers of the 9th century, reports the immemorial belief in the presence of Mary Magdalene.

Throughout history, many saints and kings, as well as crowds of Christians, went on pilgrimage to the grotto

The Sainte-Baume, nestled like an eagle's nest on the side of the immense cliff, is 910 meters above sea level. The house where the guardians of the cave live nestles against the rock on the western side of the terrace. At the top of the mountain, almost a thousand meters above sea level, stands the Saint-Pilon (column) which marks the place where Saint Mary Magdalene, according to a very ancient tradition, was carried by the angels to pray. From the terrace of the grotto, one can see to the north the Sainte-Victoire mountain range, the site of the triumph of Marins against the Teutonic invaders in 102 BC

lily ■ See Joseph Escudicr. La Sainte-Baurne, Letouzey. 1925: Ph.-I. Andri-Vincent o.p., MarieMadtlaneetlaSainte-Baiirne, Téqui, 1980 (first edition: 1950).

149-In ! 254, Saint Louis made the pilgrimage to Sainr-Maximin and the Sainte-Baume; this pilgrimage was related by Joinville.

Jesus Christ. The vast panorama, the fields of olive trees and vineyards, the forests of holm oaks and, on the northern slope of the massif, the luxuriant nature, the pure air and the clear light, the profound silence and solitude make this holy grotto a place of prayer and contemplation. Above all, a supernatural grace seems to be attached to these walls, which leads the pilgrim, as if in spite of himself, to recollection and union with God.

A great devotee of St. Mary Magdalene who came three times to the Sainte-Baume, was deeply marked by the mystical presence of the saint. Charles de Foucauld wrote:

My first step upon disembarking from the Holy Land was to go up to the Sainte-Baume. May this dear and blessed Saint Mary Magdalene teach us love, teach us to lose ourselves totally in Jesus our all, and to be lost to everything that is not him

This aspect particularly struck the newcomer. He wrote, lots of his second stay in 1960;

This is a very old place of pilgrimage (…)

The grotto invites us and helps us to pray. The pilgrims who have knelt here throughout the ages surround us with their silent presence: St. Louis of France and St. Brigid, St. Joan of Chantal and St. John Baptist de la Salle, St. Benedict Labre and Father de Foucauld. They help us to understand the marvelous story of this holy woman which is told to us by the evangelists themselves.

May Our Lady, the Immaculate Virgin. Mother of God, and Mary Magdalene, model of faith and love beyond sin, obtain for us souls of prayer.

By a design of mercy and wisdom, Providence had entrusted to the friars preachers this citadel of contemplation. In so doing, the good God manifested to the sons and daughters of St. Dominic the authentically contemplative character of their Order, the vital link between the silence of love (“Rabouni”) and the ministry of the Word (“Go tell my brothers…”). The

150 - Charles de Foucauld. Letter of 1901. The crtnite of Tatnanrxeset came on pilgrimage to the Saintequer for

Algeria at the end of his year at the Trappe de Natte-Dame des Neiges. Then a third

The Sainte-Baume

January 14, 1901, Father Sicard, guardian of the grotto, spoke to Saint Mary Magdalene in these terms:

You once said to Prince Charles of Salerno: “O incomparable saint, place my brothers in the Sainte-Baume and in Saint-Maximin” And it is us that you deigned to designate with this sweet name! Would you abandon your little brothers?

Among the sons of St. Dominic who lived in the tiny convent built on the cliff, the figure of Father Vayssière still left his mark on the walls and furniture.

The one who had received the young Roger Calmel into the order of Saint Dominic had been guardian of the Sainte-Baume from April 30, 1900 to 1932. There he lived with a lay brother, Brother Henri, who had the soul of a hermit and therefore did not hinder his solitude. In the early days, the Father often went to the hostel. But one day, as he was about to go downstairs, he heard a voice from within him: “No, don’t go downstairs, you must make the sacrifice. God has put you there, near the shrine of Mary Magdalene, and you will be, like her, a true contemplative. 11 will give you a solitary soul and you will seek, from now on, only the fullness of a life in solitude with him. “

This was a decisive turning point in his life. From then on, Father Vayssière rarely went down to the valley to devote himself more to heart-to-heart contact with God.

A few quotations from Father Vayssière will suffice to depict the spirit of the Sainte-Baume in which Father Calmel was to

live for two years (interrupted by a short stay in Montpellier):

Here I am in solitude, peace, calm. I can hear the silence with my full ears (…) This is the true atmosphere of God.

It is where he lives, where he is found (1906).

True solitude, the solitude of the heart, the solitude in which Jesus loves to make his voice heard, consists less in the arrangement of places than in a gift of grace.

Let us be what God wants, and let us be it especially with a joy without measure, when what he wants and seems to ask of us is to be his alone and to enter with him in a better intimacy. (…) To be troubled.

151-/nFr.Philippe Devoucouxdu Buyssono.p..Ciié/rr(.ù'Aï,S',““rf-Ai““icn “7,” Un maître spirinjcl pour tous, !e père Marie Étienne Vayssière “. p. 10.

If one is troubled, God is at least in sovereign peace; if one is poor, he is infinite riches if one feels soiled, he is purity without stain. If one is greedy, he is absolute holiness. If one is cold, he is love, and so on.

It was from this source that Father Calmel would drink from now on. After the reproach he had suffered in Toulouse in 1955, after his exile in Spain and the noise of the big city of Madrid and the travels. God clearly wanted to bring his priest back to the necessarium of St. Mary Magdalene. He needed to gain height, to frequent the heights of prayer in solitude,

All the more so since the sanctuary of the Sainte-Baume reminded the son of St. Dominic daily of the harsh reality of the world. It was an invitation to deep contemplation, certainly, but in the midst of the ruins and scars of the hideous revolution. When he looks up, the pilgrim sees on the cliff, a few meters above the entrance of the grotto, a few tiles embedded in the rock and the traces of an ancient roof. This is all that remains of the old building sacked by the revolutionaries.

The facts speak for themselves. On November 2, 1789, the National Assembly decided to “nationalize” the property of the clergy; on February 13, 1790, to dissolve the religious orders. The convents of Saint-Maximin and Sainte-Baume had to disappear. Inventories were drawn up; at Saint-Maximin, on November 26; at the Sainte-Baume, on December 10. The chapel of the grotto is emptied of its furniture and its ornaments by the district commissioners. Only the presence of an eighty year old man was tolerated, who was soon forced to take refuge in Nans, a helpless witness to the looting. In spite of everything, the pilgrimages lasted until 1792. At the beginning of 1793, Barras and Fréron, delegated by the Convention, arrived at Saint-Maximin: it was necessary to make money of all the objects of worship. With a band of “patriots”, they went up to the Sainte-Baume; they set fire to it; and after the fire which lasted three days, the virtuous Jacobins broke what resisted the flames, with picks and hammers. Thus, during the dark years of the first Republic, the chapels of the grotto and the Saint-Pilon were no more than a heap of rubble where no one dared to venture.

it.0/.. ri/., p. 54-55.

La Sainte-Baume

the chapel of Saint-Pilon, while the parish priest of Saint-Zacharie cleared the grotto and installed an altar. During the Hundred Days of Napoleon's return, the soldiers of Marshal Brune renewed the sacrilegious outrages.

At the Sainte-Baume, one cannot forget the radical antagonism between the revolution and the Gospel, between the cult of man and the adoration of God. And the stigmata of the hatred of Christ revived in the Dominican the zeal for souls and for Christianity.

Obviously, Father Calmel's year with St. Mary Magdalene was also very active. In addition to the ministry of confession and welcoming pilgrims, he was sent to preach in various places. For Holy Week 1958, he was in Biarritz, and at the end of August, he went to Brittany.

Pontcallec

At the end of 1957, Father Calmel had his first contacts with the Dominican Sisters of the Holy Spirit of Pontcallec. During trips to her family, one of the sisters went several times to the Sainte-Baume and met the Dominican. On her return to Pontcallec, she spoke about him to Father Betto who invited her to preach the next community retreat.

What kind of congregation opened its doors to him!

Father Berto was born in Pontivy (Morbihan) in 1900 and was baptized the same day he was born. During his brilliant studies at the Lycée, when, except for rare and brief confessions, he had never spoken to a clergyman, he knew that he would be a priest during the midnight mass of Christmas 1914. After his baccalaureate, because of the hostility of his father, who was still a non-believer, he

prepared a degree in philosophy which he obtained at the age of nineteen. He was a teacher at the high schools of Lorient, Dinan and Vitré. A Dominican priest since 1920, he was able to enter the French seminary in Rome when he came of age in 1921 and was ordained a priest in 1926.

The young priest was first a curate in a rural parish, then a professor of Sacred Scripture at the major seminary of Vannes in 1928. His success did not please everyone, and he was “promoted” to chaplain of the Ursuline nuns of Vannes and their institution (NotreDame du Ménimur) in 1932. He remained there for ten years. It was then that Father Berto founded homes for orphans, supervised by young girls who had graduated from the Ménimur school. In 1943, these girls formed a fraternity of the Third Order of Saint Dominic, which became the Institute

155-See Guy ScrifF, UabbéBerto et la Mission de France, une imprévisible amitié, DMM. 2002.

of the Dominican Sisters of the Holy Spirit. Father Berto was called by Archbishop Marcd Lefebvre to be his private theologian during the second and third sessions of Vatican Council II. He died in Pontcallec on December 17, 1968.

Providence therefore directed Father Calmel towards this holy priest and his work. Since all contact with the Dominican Sisters of the Holy Name of Jesus was forbidden to him, he could now transmit to this new Dominican audience the spirit of the Order and the experience he had acquired in the teaching religious life. This collaboration was to last until Father Calmel's death,

The retreat took place from July 26 to August 4, 1958. The most varied themes addressed by the preacher are a testimony of his doctrine and spiritual direction at the end of the fifties. The notes taken by a sister allow us to follow the course.

The preacher began by pointing out the dignity of consecrated virginity, which allows a woman to "share in the youth of the Church" and to present the truth to souls with "holy hands". Certainly, the danger of such a state of life is the withdrawal into oneself. The nun will therefore take care to "hold her interior discourses always in conspectu Dei", to put "her preoccupations, her burdens, her temptations, her disappointments, her revolts, her humiliations, before God". The saints, in fact, are "active, agile, light (see the angels and the birds of heaven), forgetful. They do not fall back on themselves. "

More than any other baptized person, the religious must aspire to holiness, do what he can to grow in union with God. In this respect, the danger that threatens him is “the sin of omission; pusillanimity, the fear of risk, of danger and of temptation”. Here, Father Calmel smilingly quoted Paul Claudel’s quip that the timid man should pray thus: “Holy Spirit, do not ink, I fear the drafts. “To the timid souls who feared the active life, Father Calmel preached spiritual poverty, he invited them to “stand before God in perpetual insecurity and untiring confidence”.

Secondly, the disciple of St. Thomas could not fail to link this consecrated life to its source, to the sacrifice of Christ at Mass, which is that of the Cross. Already in 1958, he could be saddened by the lack of faith and piety of many priests and faithful with regard to the Holy Mass. Not without concern, and perhaps even in a prophetic vision, he recalled that, before being denied dogmatically by Protestants, the Mass had been denied in practice for more than a century. A recovery was therefore necessary from the cult to the holy sacrifice. Starting with religious, since, he said, “holiness is the interior prayer that corresponds to liturgical prayer”.

It is there, at the altar, that one draws love for the cross. To this audience of Dominican Sisters, the Father reminded them that, if the spirit of the Order is that of “contemplation, doctrine and liturgical meaning, it is also a cult, a participation in the Cross of Christ. For St. Dominic, supplication for sinners, nights in prayer, preceded preaching. In the Christian school, this detachment is found in daily life, in the general climate which is that of “an austerity in enthusiasm”,

The Blessed Virgin Mary and the Rosary had a great place in the preaching of the retreat. “The Rosary, in fact, is part of the great liturgy, that which details the life of Christ. The rosary interiorizes the liturgy, and all the more so when one entrusts oneself to the Blessed Virgin. “That is why it is “a school of prayer and of realism in prayer. Now, “the glory of the Virgin has been poured out on every woman”. It is from the Holy Mother of God that the sisters will discover the greatness of their vocation and the Christian dignity of women. And they will have to defend the children entrusted to them against the lies of the devil. The devil would have the young girls believe that

- Purity is a myth and a foolishness,

- marriage in a humble and submissive condition is an alienation and a diminution,

- children are a tiresome burden,

- virginity is a diminution of the person.

Conversely, the woman must accept God’s plan for her, the natural limitations of marriage, the simple and modest condition of the home, and all the renunciations that go with it. Her role is humble, but very dignified. For it is she who sustains the atmosphere of the home, who establishes purity, humility, and generous service to her neighbor.

At the end of the retreat, Father Calmel preached at the profession ceremony of a Dominican sister. To the sister’s parents, and as a tribute to his own mother, he quoted her reflection on her first visit to SaintiMaximin: “I will be happy as long as you are happy.” So happy to hear the language of an authentic son of St. Dominic, the Dominican Sisters of the Holy Spirit very often invited Father Calmel thereafter for study lesions at Pontcallec or for conferences at their house

in Saint-Cloud. A true friendship was to unite the Dominican and Abbé Berto, a tertiary of the Order.

Renewed Christian School

This first meeting with Pontcallec was for Father Calmel a sign of Providence. He needed to extend and deepen his reflections on the conditions of Christian teaching in our time, especially that carried out by consecrated souls. Moreover, his stay in Spain had not stopped his zeal in this field. On the one hand, he was able to continue the series of articles he had begun in the review L'École, always under the pseudonym of Biaise de Neufchâtel. In November 1956, in fact, he was able to present his superiors with the first text of the Renewed Christian School. In Spain, he received the nihil obstat from the Toulouse censors dated December 14, 1956, and then Ximprimi potest from his prior provincial, Father Vincent de Paul Rande, on January 1, 1957. On the other hand, he had to wait a year and a half to be able to print his book at the Téqui publishing house (imprimatur to the diocese of Paris, June 4, 1958).

Calmel's profound thoughts on education, on the school, on the vocation of women and their formation, which he had acquired through prayer, study and experience, and which he had already seen put into practice in certain houses of the Congregation of the Dominican Sisters of the Holy Name of Jesus, are clearly expressed in this work.

A very dynamic conception of the school emerges from this work. It is the place of a crusade, that of the truth, but a light and enthusiastic crusade. Since it is necessary to be "all things to all people in order to save them all", Father

Calmel asks those who devote themselves to children to be inhabited by the simplicity and hope of the children. That the teachers be “enchanted” by the subject matter they teach, unceasingly attentive to the “song of truth” and that they make the children enter into this “melody” (p. 43), that they love the truth with ardor and communicate it “with a serene enthusiasm” (p. 63), and that they receive the crosses of life “with a child’s soul”.

and the danger of moralism”, February 16, 1957. p. 463: “The small classes and the grammar school”, February 14

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Itineraries

Calmel’s articles in various magazines, his preaching and his first books, his friendships, especially with the Dominican Sisters of the Holy Name of Jesus, his lucidity and his theological depth gave him a growing reputation. Thus he attracted the attention of the founder of the young review Itinéraires^ who contacted him while he was still living in Spain. Soon. Jean Madiran invited him to collaborate in his work.

The choice was a happy one. Since the sluggishness of his classmates at the minor seminary, the muted or open opposition between the disciples of Maurras and those of Mounier at the Catholic Institute, the increasingly manifest drift of his Order after the war, not to mention the bitterness of exile, Father Calmel had been prepared by Providence to face the merciless reality of subversion, to serve as a teacher to souls of good will and to lead them into battle. His clear-sightedness and firmness of thought, the balance of his judgment, acquired in prayer and study, had been tempered by experience.

First meeting

The first meeting between the two future comrades-in-arms took place in Paris, at the Vierge de Saint-Sulpicc - in family - in 1958. Like many people afterwards, Jean Madiran was a little surprised by the face of the preacher brother.

Those who met Father Calmel after reading him were at first struck by the fact that he had a physical stature that bore little relation to his moral authority. Physically, he was puny, sickly-looking.

and really sick very often; always diminished by a congenital heart failure. I believe that Pascal, whom he loved (whom he canonized), helped him a lot to live in the usual painful company of the weaknesses and the sufferings of the body. In this painful and weak body, what a soul! A soul of crusade Jean Madiran will summarize this long collaboration with brevity and accuracy:

We worked together for seventeen years. His contract was in a few words. I had asked him to be a priest of the order of St. Dominic in the magazine. He answered that he could not and would not be anything else.

Father Calmel accepted this new responsibility. This, however, was not self-evident. Until now, he had written in reviews attached to well-defined institutions: the Revue Thomiste, the work of the Dominican province of Toulouse, La Vie dominicaine, the organ of the tertiaries of France, VÉcolt. Itinéraires was of a completely different kind. Encouraged, certainly, by competent ecclesiastics, calling upon theologians and thinkers of great quality, Jean

Madiran's review was a personal work, somewhat like Louis Veuillot's review L'Univers in the nineteenth century, By the very fact, by force of circumstance, the review Itinéraires was addressed to a chosen readership. It had its place in the French literary world, but it was not the work of an institution. From the outset, Father Calmel was not at all inclined to such a specialization; he knew that he had been sent to the world for the salvation of souls through the ministry of preaching, an apostle to all, beginning with the faithful and the unfaithful of the

piroisscs. An anecdote illustrates this state of mind very well. The first year he went to La Pétaudière for Holy Week, in 1969, Father Calmel was suddenly sad and said:

"It's not enough what I'm doing here; I'm a preacher brother, I should at least help with confessions in a village for the holy days.

And yet, he was at the end of his rope.

- But, Father, you can hardly stand all the services and confessions here!" objected Luce Quenette.

- I tell you that I am a preacher brother and I have to take care of the poor people, the faithful of the parish. "

Nevertheless, he soon understood the need for the theological and spiritual formation of an elite and the duty he had to encourage souls of good will in their resistance to the modernist avalanche. The "mystical realism" which had animated him until now and which he had tried to transmit around him would be the grain of sand which would stop the revolt machine, and the flag of the restoration of Christianity. It was a new field of apostolate that was

opening up to him, a more determined, more convinced readership. Father Calmel's preaching was entering a new stage.

However, we can guess that the contribution of a Dominican father to the review \mimm was not going to please everyone. The Dominicans spoke," explains Jean Madiran, "wrote, and published everywhere, as long as it was on the left and for the left, always covered by their local superiors." Father Calmel, for his part, met with strong opposition to his collaboration in a review that was already being accused of "fundamentalism. The superiors hesitated or expressed their dissatisfaction. It was necessary for Jean Madiran to go to Rome, in 1958, "to the highest level of the government of the Dominican order and the Roman curia", to obtain, thanks to the support of Cardinal Tardini, the authorization for Father Calmel's collaboration. This came in May 1959. In the meantime, the Dominican signed his articles with the pseudonym Roger Thomas. This authorization came from so high a level that no one dared to question it.

léO-Jean Madiran, Postface a \i Brève apobgicpour l'Église de toujours, éditions [)ifr.divrc, 19K-1,

p.m

161. As long as he could, Father Cdmei had his articles corrected by a censor of his Order. He wrote in 1963: "The Father {very good) who censored my articles, died very suddenly at 60 .ms. \You have to pay for him. I think that Father Augustin Bernard (the old one, white beard) whom you knew at the Sainte-Baume, will accept to continue the censorship; of him I am sure. >- (letter from

9fhTier 1963)

Thereafter, the two men met often: at Fontgombault, at Saint-Cloud at the Dominican Sisters of the Holy Spirit. They remember the young Madiran climbing two by two the steps of the staircase that led to the second floor to the small room where Father Calmel was waiting for him,

A real collaboration

The term “collaboration” between the editors of Itinéraires and the Brother Preacher is apt, for it indicates not only a common work, but also an exchange of points of view, a mutual enrichment. It is true, in fact, that if Father Calmel contributed much to Itinéraires, he also benefited from the spirit of the review.

Starting with the understanding of Christianity. During a visit to the Benedictine monastery of Fontgombault, on July 11, 1963, he gave an address to the monks in which he explained the nature and purpose of Jean Madiran’s magazine. This shows how much he identified with this work. But he simply confessed:

How the ministry - with the teachers - forced me to grasp the importance of institutions and holiness in the temporal; the permanent data of this order - things that had become foreign to our Dominican formation and the climate of the Order in France.

However, in spite of this providential preparation, Father needed time and reflection to deepen this notion of Christianity. In July 1959, after a year of collaboration with Itinéraires, he wrote:

On the very notion of France, History must make us understand what is; now, what is is is a temporal reality (the

fatherland and the State), not pure and simple, but baptized. This is what Charlier and Madiran helped me to understand better; France is a baptized nation, or if you like, a Christian nation which, in part, is apostate; which seeks to recover fidelity to its baptism. France has a soul (which is dying) and a Christian soul (…) If the history of France does not grasp this, it misses (…)

The political history of France remains the political history of a country

On the other hand, the magazine Itinéraires allowed Father Calmel to better understand the techniques of subversion. In the conference already cited, he confided to the monks that, before his contact with the magazine, he did not see "to what extent the positive was colonized," to what extent Catholic works had allowed themselves to be won over by the spirit of the world and of the revolution.

Itinémir

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An overview of Father Calmel's articles in Jean Madiran's review will show the deepening of his author's thought over the years and the pains he went through. In return, one can well imagine the immense benefit that the Dominican gave to Itinéraires from the very first contacts.

In the first place, and according to the wish of the director himself, it was a question of giving the review a more frankly theological and Thomistic appearance. To the monks of Fontgombault, he explained:

It is a review which is part of the French tradition of the Thomistic and literary renewal of the last half-century. (…) It must also make more room for Thomistic theology.

(…) I would like to insert Thomism in this tradition of French culture (Péguy, Bernanos): I would like to show how Thomism is the natural framework of culture; I would like to present theology, not so much as a theologian-teacher, but in such a way as to speak also to the spiritual life, to the poetic faculties, in such a way as to make in the minds a unity, in such a way that Thomism is present to the living forces of the spirit, and not as a foreign body, in such a way that it is not judged as only scientific, scholastic, having nothing to do with culture, disincarnate.

I would also like to do a theology of history.

In this same line of authentic Thomism, Father Calmel worked to ensure that the doctrinal combat of Itinéraires was inspired by the great principles of Catholic theology. Because of the defection of men of the Church, the review had to undertake the defense of Sacred Scripture, the catechism (of the Council of Trent and of Saint Pius X) and the traditional Mass. Now, if it was necessary to tackle such high subjects, this was not without dangers, in particular that of a certain vulgarization which compartmentalized the revealed data. The presence of this great theologian among the contributors to the magazine was very profitable in this area as well. Father Calmel explains this in a later letter:

Catechism, Mass. Scripture means: catechism and Gospel reading; Mass and prayer life and beautiful liturgy; Scripture and theological and patristic commentaries

: 1974.

Li by Roger-Thomas Calmel

Du rtsEc, k di<aplc of St. Thomas Aquinas rejoiced in the rigucn doorinak îllmmiro and his zeal for the truth. His presentation m monks of Fonigombault continues:

It is a magazine with a very deep sense of the perversion of our time: of the colonization of thought by modern advertising means; which knows that one cannot make a pact with evil; which wants to bring the remedy with light and fight with the weapons of sound doctrine. The difficulties encountered by Itineraries :

- We are hated It is not our limits that are pointed out, it is our intention that is hated.

- Insane pressure.

- In any case, the magazine prevents prescription, defends a little free space, prepares for better days, for days of greater fidelity to Christ, desired and recognized, prepares for the day when the great apostolic orders will want to help us instead of crushing us.

Cqrendani, for Father Calmel, militancy must be qualified by m certain discernment. After confessing his own naivety, he adds; I did not see how much of the positive was colonized. Madiran may not have seen what was positive in: the movements of households, liturgical efforts, missionary efforts. But all these efforts were often against Tradition or ignoring it - ignoring the doctrines - with progressive chaplains.

It is a very Thomistic wisdom to see the true and the good where they are found, even if it means correcting doctrines and then warning against the shortcomings and, if necessary, the intentions of those who profess them.

Moreover, Father Calmel had a determining influence on a much more important aspect of the cult of truth, that of the subordination of obedience to truth, of authority to Tradition. The men of the Church legitimately use their authority only

for the sake of the truth, to define a truth that has always been taught.

From the first months of his collaboration, he protested strongly against a univocal conception, in short too human or mechanical, of authority Jean Madiran tells;

At the time of Pius XII, the dan already dominant in the Church of France commonly accused us of “papolatry”. 11 accused us wrongly. We were not idolaters. But we were excessive and imprudent. We had forgotten the crude lessons of the condemnation of the Action

French Action. Since we were lucky enough to have a Pius XII! We were made aware of this by the ardent preaching of Marcel Clément, who had a great deal of happiness of thought and expression in his exposition of the doctrine of the reigning pope. However, he already had a tendency to be unconditional, with an enthusiasm that scorned the nuances, precisions and limits always brought by the Church in its teaching of obedience. These Clementine-papist exaggerations of /riiiéraires, there were two who did not fit in at all, Louis Salleron and Father Calmel, each on his own side, because they hardly knew each other. Louis Salleron used to say to us: “You will be well caught when you have two or three popes at the same time. “We replied that this does not happen every day. 11 happened to us even worse with Paul VI. (…) With Paul VI, it was the Pope who no longer had the Pope’s Mass. The Pope separated from himself. (…)

At the time of Pius XII, we did not imagine the possibility of such an abomination. Marcel Clément, after Jean Ousset, repeated the sentence of Saint Pius X: “There can be no

holiness where there is dissension with the pope. “Father Calmel was very energetic in rejecting this proposal. The authority invoked did not shake his certainty. St. Pius X is St. Pius X, he venerated him with all his heart, but this was a private opinion that was not right. The history of the Church shows us canonized saints who disagreed with popes who were not canonized. Father Calmel also appealed to theology; and to common sense. St. Pius X, in the same place in his speech to the priests of December 2, 1912, popularized in the successive editions of Pour qu’il règne, declared: “There is no limit to the field in which the pope can and must exercise his will,” If one understands that this field has no limit, or only the limit that each pontiff wants to recognize, in the absence of any objective criterion, one falls into a manifest error, Father Calmel told us. 11 said in vain, the error was not obvious to us. We had Pius XII.

Here appear the strength and the fruitfulness of the realism of Saint Thomas. In the magisterium, extraordinary or ordinary, the criteria of authenticity and infallibility are to the doctrine defined what the soul is to the body. There is no.

Kto special on pcrc Calmel, n” 206. sep

In short, the magisterium of the Church, the word of Christ through the homilies of the Church, only if the act of authority is directed to a truth that has always been taught by the Church. In order to defend oneself against the modernists and to justify the pope they were attacking, one had focused too much on the (formal) conditions of authority to the detriment of the objectivity of the truth of all time.

Father Calmel in no way despised the Pope and the ordinary magisterium, but he saw them in the light of realism, which considers all created things as a unified whole of matter and form.

From their first contacts, the relations between Father Calmel and the principal writers of the itineraries took on the appearance of a frank and friendly colliboration, which could go as far as fraternal correction. The Dominican was able to enjoy again that communion of thought and work which he had hardly found in his Order for a long time. 11 was obviously touched by this.

So the preacher brother set to work. It was from above, from the heights of contemplation that he had to distribute to souls of good will the solid nourishment of his preaching. It was from the eternal principles that he had to descend into the harsh reality.

Over the years, almost one hundred and fifty articles followed one another, dealing with all the subjects of which the Dominican saw the urgency for souls: the interior life, the Immaculate Virgin, education, the heresies of the moment, the saints, France, Sacred Scripture, the priesthood, History, the temporal order, the Church, the liturgy… As we read, the “mystical realism” that he had received from his teachers appears as the only adequate response to the great evils that are befalling the world and the Church.

Politics and domestic life

This is evident from the first five articles, which deal with the relationship between politics and the inner life.

The choice of the subject is certainly ordered by the situation of the world and of France. In Indochina, after the

bloody defeat of Dien Bien Phu (May 7, 1954), a “peace” was signed that handed over half of Vietnam to the communists (July 21, 1954). In Algeria, the founding of the F.L.N.

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(National Liberation Front) in October 1954 marked the beginning of numerous attacks and assassinations and the “Algerian War. On May 13, 1958, crowds invaded the seat of government in Algiers. The military measures did nothing. Especially since France’s domestic policy was itself disastrous. The ministries succeeded one another and proved incapable of dealing with the situation. On 29 May 1958, President Coty asked the government to appoint General de Gaulle as President of the Council. On June 1, he received full powers for six months. On June 4, he went to Algiers and pronounced his famous and very ambiguous “I have understood you” speech, which deceived many French people. His intention is to finish with French Algeria ®. Above all, General de Gaulle intends to reform the constitution of the Fourth Republic. The new constitution is elaborated in less than three months under the high direction of Michel Debré. On September 28, 1958, the “French people” were called to vote on the text. There were only 15.6% of abstentions, and the “yes” votes represented 79.25% of the votes cast for a constitution that meant a significant move away from God and the Church in France. It was the birth of the Fifth Republic and the triumph of General de Gaulle, who was chosen President of the Republic by 82,000 voters, *i.e.* 78.5% of the votes. He took office on January 8, 1959.

Political and social life was like a powder keg. What was to be done? At the very least, the time seemed to have come for Christians to sit down and reflect. Unfortunately, a great

number of Catholics liked to follow or even anticipate this destruction of France. A

Father Roger-Thomas Calmel

the natural laws of a real political order in the name of a certain supernatural life (Maritain). With these, Father Calmel insists that man cannot remain at the welfare of the order, he must “tend to holiness”. The best political constitution of the best society will never dispense with the heroism of holiness. But with the first, he maintains the necessity of a realistic political order. The two elements must not be dissociated: a city founded on the natural order and, on the other hand, the demands of grace, so that “civism is in some way penetrated by fervor and evangelical purity, (…) by a tendency towards holiness and a desire for Christian heroism”.

In this regard, Father Calmel recalls the beautiful example of Spain, Christian life and the primacy of charity do not form effeminates, but seek, even in the political domain, to “unite two complementary attitudes: on the one hand, the merciless reprobation of evil and error, and on the other hand, the merciful will to seek to respond to the darkness of error by a more luminous truth, to the ravages of evil by a more avenient and stronger good. Had this been sufficiently considered in Algeria? “An integral response to the revolutionaries requires not only the affirmation and explanation of the traditional political doctrine, but also at least as much spiritual fervor in conforming to it as they put into following the aberrant myths. “And therefore, “unite to the argumentation the testimony of life”.

Moreover, realism seeks to know its enemy. One cannot claim to be a counter-revolutionary as long as one has not seen in the revolution “its essential inspiration” and as long

as one has not dared “with Joseph de Maistre to call it satanic”. Consequently, the authentic remedy can only be that which unites the power of God and a healthy human reflection.

Clearly, Father Calmel is speaking from experience. None of the conflicts he had witnessed since his childhood had been satisfactorily answered. The stories of the 1914-1918 war, the political recovery from 1920 on, the polemic between the liberals (Blondel, Mounier) and Action Française in the years 1927-1930, the restoration of a French order at the time of the German occupation, the time of the so-called Liberation from 1945 on, and to a small extent also the current political and social life in Spain, not to speak of the liberal or socialist myths that excited the crowds, these antagonisms did not and could not provide the solution to the immense contemporary problem.

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The remedy could only come from the union of nature and grace, of politics and mysticism, of true France and the Church of all time, in CCS “solidarities willed by God”. “Let not man separate what Dicuauni,”(Mtl9,6)

In the same spirit, Father Calmel, descending quite naturally from society to the family, then considers marriage and identifies its essential elements: asceticism and chastity; the eternal finality of human generation; the conviction, in the spouses, of the superiority of consecrated virginity.

This is also the light in which he considers the problem of the priest-workers with which he was confronted in Marseilles. It is worthwhile to consult here a particularly clear text by Father Calmel on the subject of Charles Maurras. It is an article written two years earlier than those

mentioned above, but which expresses the spirit of the latter very well. In the review [‘Ecole of January 12, 1957, the Dominican, under the pseudonym of Biaise de Neufchatel, gave a review of the book by Canon Cormier, La vie intérieure de Charles Maurras

“There is little History of a soul conducted with such probity, accuracy, reserve, and venerating attention,” he says, and it considerably helps the reader to distinguish what, in the founder of the Action française, was genius from what made the deep life of his soul. The canon makes it clear that Maurras’s drama was not only due to the deafness that came upon him suddenly at the age of fifteen, but rather, linked to it, to the inner struggle “of a soul eager for purity and moral greatness against the powerful attraction of impure forces. What Maurras lacked was not so much faith as hope and charity. Certainly, following his great inner crisis and after a crisis of anarchy, the monarchical leader recovered some principles of the natural order and even a sense of the primacy of Catholic Rome, but this was not enough to make him a Christian politician. Here is the commentary of Father Calmel:

1 author takes on “subversive Christians”. To bring him back to piety towards their fatherland. He gives them what is so dear to him, these inseparable compounds united

He was attached with all his heart to a country which had remained Christian and the true kingdom of Mary; such bonds could become a means of conversion, especially since a crowd of readers, to whom he made understand the reasons for living in France, did not stop praying for him. In fact, the prayers and the heartbreak of so many Catholics, and your good will, deep down, of the great leader Interdit, but especially the intervention of the Carmel of Lisieux and Mother Agnes were to bring about the submission and the

reconciliation of the one “whose heart was so good” in spite of the “bad head”.

As early as 1937, during his first pilgrimage to Lisieux, it seems that the essential change is accomplished in this rebellious freedom and that Maurras’ soul knows a certain appeasement. But the habits of thinking had been established for a very long time; they could not change much; the fold of the intelligence was too deep. The doctrinal work had been built, the soul not being in agreement with God; now that the soul found its God, it is too late to make the expenses of a new construction. This observation plunges us into an immense melancholy.

The soul was saved for eternity: and that is all, in a certain sense. However, by the very fact that we peregrinate on earth, we cannot do without the illuminations of genius; now, in the case of Charles Maurras, the work of genius would remain largely foreign to the light of Jesus Christ and could not serve as it is for the establishment of a Christian city; it would require decisive recasting.

(…) What politically minded Christian would refuse to undertake them, if he had at least sensed the extraordinary human richness of the author of The Inner Balance, the sovereignty of his thought, the terrible conflict that was unleashed in this soul and in many others that

until the day when a saint with the heart of a child was able to bring back light and peace.

This study ends with a quotation from Charles Maurras’ “Prayer of the End”, which shows the soulfulness of the

recent convert:

Lord, put me to sleep in your sure peace.

Between the arms of hope and love.

This old soldier’s heart has not known hate.

And for your only true possessions beaten without return.

The battle he fought was for a country.

For a king, the most beautiful we have seen under the sky,

The France of the Bourbons, of Mesdames Marie, jeanne d’Arc and Thérèse and Monsieur saint Michel.

The assiduous reader of Father Calmel’s writings will have easily recognized the “realism” that characterized him. Political genius and its works are like a body without a soul as long as they are not vivified and moved by supernatural faith. But after the inner conversion of their author, they must be revised and corrected to become the body, the “matter” adequate to this new light of life. It is to this fundamental work that he called the Christians.

In doing so, he was following the indications of Providence. For poor humanity was not left to itself, without strength or light, to sustain the onslaught of the revolution. The Blessed Virgin Mary, Queen of Christianity, intervened during the Great War, when the communist revolution was about to take off. This is why, at the end of these studies on Christian politics, Father Calmel directs his readers’ attention to the apparitions of Fatima ‘For “the peace of the world, political peace, is a gift of God and of the Immaculate Heart of Mary (p. 12). “Our Lady was “involved in the temporal aspects of the Incarnation as only the mother of the Incarnate Word

could be involved. That is why “she continues to watch over the temporal aspect of humanity insofar as it is related to the mystical body of her Son Jesus Christ” (p. 21). “Because Our Lady intervenes at Fatima to preserve us from communism (p. 23), she teaches us the laws of true peace, which comes from conversion and the principles of the Church.

The political thought and action of Christians can only be married.

p. 18 32. See R.-Th. Calmel, Voici ta mère. NEL. 2005, p. 11-37.

n” 38, Dec.

Messianism

From November 1959 onwards, Father Calmel began to deal with the central issue of both neo-modernism and the various contemporary political schools, that of messianism. At first sight, this term dcstl the movement of universal gathering and the fraternization of men

in the perfect happiness”. But the first

The devil himself during the temptation of Christ in the desert.

“It is the devil who proposes the false messianisms of all kinds; who better to do it as our world is hastening towards its end”,

There is certainly a Christian conception of messianism, if we understand it as the expectation of the Parousia. But it is something quite different from the messianism of the Jews who wait for the Messiah as if he had not yet come, or from that of the moderns who work for the coming of humanity. "The messianism of redemption supposes a kingdom of eternity situated at the level of holiness, of the purification of the soul and its union with God. "This is "the beatitude of the Cross". Not that the Christian has no temporal hope. In this regard, Father Calmel warns against a spirituality of universal and implacable catastrophe, because the kingdom of God "always succeeds in some points and by some trials and fragments, even if only at the level of the family, in bringing about a temporal justice worthy of the kingdom of God. "However, contemporary politics, world government, liberalism are a reflection of communism which "wants a messiah, but since it rejects God, this messiah can only be humanity itself st divinizing through material production and revolution'™. "Politics takes on a theological dimension here.

As the articles progress, the tone becomes more serious, the style more and more prophetic. In his "Proposals on the struggle of Satan against the Church", he reminds us that the devil will attack the Church "until the end of time", "from within and from without", as already in the time of Saint Paul who had to suffer the "dangers of the pagans and the dangers of the false brothers". But "the devil and his troops, evil, are becoming more and more sophisticated. They are always adding and inventing new strategies. "Nowadays his great tactic consists above all in "perverting the temporal city in order to organize it as a

“This book is dominated by the serene idea of the peace of Chrisr, of his infallible victory and the joyful rest of his faithful. “

To better understand the devil’s strategy, it is also necessary to see him at work, especially according to the gospel accounts. The terrible reality of hell, of the penalty of death and the penalty of fire shows what is at stake in the fight for the earthly city.

On the other hand, Father Calmel warns the readers of Itineraries against a certain impatience. For the difficulty of the present crisis comes not only from the cunning and aggressiveness of the enemy, but also from its duration. Therefore, it is not for us to know the day and hour of the end of this trial. “Do not worry about when the crisis will end, but be witnesses to God and his law. “

Does this mean that we have no chance of seeing the outcome of our struggles?

Thomistic realism will again give the answer The desire to see with one’s own eyes the result of one’s work and the victory after the battle is certainly not bad, but as a “material cause”, adapted to a “formal cause”, the hope of eternal goods and of the kingdom of the ciciu, “One must hope for these earthly goods in a Christian way, that is to say, hope for them neither as definitive nor as sufficient, (…) and as linked to the hope of eternal goods. “The latter “purifies these hopes, calms them, orients them and puts them in their place”.

There is no question of resigning from earthly duties, of “declaring too quickly that the battle is impossible”. Relying on grace, “the true disciple of Christ will never be discouraged from the earth”.

To conclude this series of articles on the duties imposed on Christians by the present situation, Father Calmel takes a filial look at the victory of God par excellence, at the woman of Revelation (Apocalypse 12), 1 Immaculate Conception This is the victory of grace, but “a tender victory, an irrepressible victory. (...) The unhoped-for passage of the sweet victory of the nobility of God. “This gives the trials of the earth, even the most bitter, a

183 - “Notc<loctrinalc5urrcnfcr”,//m^4/rcfn” 45, July-August l960,p. 30 etsv.

184’ “Ni le jour ni l’heure 46, September-October 1960, p. lSctsv.

185 ‘ “Christian hope and human hopes”, Itinéraires n® 47, November 1960,

186 - “Salve Regina for the Feast of the Immaculate Conception”, Itineraries n” 48. December 1960.

delicious perfume. Mary, clemens, pia, dulcis, virgo, will be for ever the life. It sweetness and the hope of the fights of the militant Church.

These first works of Father Calmel were enthusiastically received by the readers of S Itinéraires. One of them expressed very well the impression of a great number:

Through his words and writings, he was a true light that traced a clear path that comforted the spirits;

- The logic of his analysis, the lucidity of his Judgment, the strength of his writing, the fearlessness of his action aroused admiration and won the support of the few individuals in search of certainty. His intellectual sagacity gave him a clear vision in all domains, on the thoughts, the acts, the gestures

that make or break the order willed by God on society. He judged events and political acts with the precision of Saint Thomas.

- The great mastery of his thought allowed him to go very far, to feel the smallest disturbance that could become the most dangerous

- He wanted to serve only the truth and to prevent pitfalls on the road to the salvation of souls, so he made it a point to speak plainly (...)

In these years of decay, of questioning the foundations of our faith, we needed this powerful voice... Father Calmel went from one place to another to communicate the evangelical certainties, the intangible doctrine, the necessary resistance. He revived energies by visiting small groups of distraught friends. He did a more profound work there than from a platform.

Jean Madiran, for his part, summarized Father Calmel's collaboration with the review Itinéraires as follows It was only the radiation of a dense and luminous interior life, his word was only the reflection of his being;

The theology, the liturgy, the constitutions of the Dominican Order were not a guide or a regulation for him, but an interior nourishment. In our midst he fulfilled the task of a friar preacher, son of St. Dominic, disciple of St. Thomas, priest of Jesus Christ, apostle of the Church and of the Church.

187 - Nicolas Dchan (Maurice lAacX), Le Sel de la Terre rC 12 bis, May 1995, pp. 7-9.

18 * Jtm Madiran. Afterword to the Brief Apology for the Church of Always. Diftalivir, 1987. p. 152.

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Montpellier

Father Calmel’s first stay with St. Mary Magdalene lasted only one year. In November 1958, he was sent to the convent of Saint Dominic in Montpellier. If we have to look for a reason that goes beyond the ordinary apostolic needs of the province, it is possible to think that the superiors sought, through the arrival of this observant and prayerful preacher, to counterbalance the “advanced” Dominicans and thus to balance the community. In the province of Toulouse, in fact, the convent of the Languedoc capital was one of the most open to new ideas.

The gap is widening

Discussions were going well in the convent, and the young Father Calmel spared neither time nor effort to remind his confreres of the most elementary principles of Catholic thought. The most famous of the Montpellier fathers was already without question the very red Father Jean Cardonnel:

189 - Born in 1921, ordained a priest in 1950, Jean Cardonnel was known for his revolutionary ideas. In 195.5, he already showed his admiration for the Maoist revolution. In March 1968, during a sermon in Paris, he enthusiastically announced the changes that were going to revolutionize the country

of left-wing Christians and admiring intcIlcctucls. Father Cardonnel was only expelled from the convent of Montpellier on September 11, 2002 and destined to the convent of the sisters of Quiüan (Aude). The domi

dence without cautel, there was no one else needed but “a virgin sent by the King of Heaven” (and not some political activist), a “daughter of God” who would live to the bottom of her soul the “Messire Dieu premier servi”. Because there are saints who adhere above all to the pure spiritual. The temporal, in the best times of the Christian civilization, ceased to be “a cut-throat and a bad place”, I developed these remarks to you the afternoon of a Sunday of the month of May, while strolling on the superb esplanade of Peyrou. According to your terrible habit of inventing many and one ways of brilliantly evading (and with sophisms) the precise discussion on a precise point, you glossed over, commented on, arranged, twisted the yet obvious distinction of the temporal and the spiritual so well that, at the end of four hours of speech, I still did not know if and how you admitted this distinction, however essential in the Catholic religion

Since the spring of 1959, one can say that you have not clarified your ideas on this point. Or rather, you have sunk deeper into the confusion between spiritual and political

In a spirit of fraternal loyalty, and perhaps with a little naivety, Father Calmel said what he knew to be the Catholic truth. This could only accentuate his gap with his brothers in religion. Little by little, a

lus Christ to confess the faith ’” ? “

Father Calmcl would certainly not have subscribed to certain expressions in this testimony, such as “malice”, “relentlessness”, “enemy”, so far was he from any rancor and any susceptibility. Nevertheless, the fact is real. In many religious or priestly houses, clerics who protested about their fidelity to Tradition were, already at that time, marginalized, isolated, despised by the mass who followed or went ahead

of the current. Father Calmel was no exception, all the more so because he spoke openly and disseminated his thought through his oral and written preaching. This put him at odds with the preaching and the way of life of his brothers in religion.

Lt. Pope John XXIII

Another circumstance was to increase Father Calmel's isolation. Just after his arrival in Montpellier, the death of Pope Pius XII and the election of Pope John XXIII took place.

Certainly, the great pope of the Assumption had had some weaknesses that had serious consequences, especially for the Church in France. If he had "stood up to his last day against the invasion of apostasy" in all its forms, and if he had defended the Church with an admirable genius and greatness of soul. Pius XII made some decisions or committed some omissions that Father Calmel, in one of his last articles, took the liberty of pointing out, with a deep filial respect:

Each time he evokes Pius XII, Madiran finds compelling terms to exalt the greatness of the genius and fortitude of the doctor who stood up to his last day against the invasion of apostasy. The prodigious role of Pius XII as defender of the Church is not

What about the many doctrinal priests and friends of God who were savagely dismissed by the modernists after 1962? There is no point in dreaming about what a Church of France would have been like if it had had an Abbé Berto, an Abbé Collin, an Abbé Roui and so many others: the question of

why Pius XII did not do so remains in my eyes insoluble. Just as, for me at least, his omission to put on the Index one of the most proven and active modernists, the Jesuit Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, remains insoluble. And I say nothing of the surprisingly benign treatment of the leaders of the modernism of 1950, those whose heresies Humant Generis so strongly condemned. Just as I do not understand why the great Pius XII introduced the Trojan horse of "federations" among the nuns. Nor do I understand why the Jesuits of Bea recreated the psalter, which remains an enigma for me. I take the liberty of pointing out these limits of a great pontificate so that the reader will not be confused, despite the admirable similarities. Pius XII and St. Pius X In spite of these reservations which want to emphasize the holiness of St. Pius X, Father Calmel recognized with all in Pius XII a very great pope, defender of priestly holiness and of the Catholic Tradition. After the long reign of such a leader, the advent of John XXIII was, for the most lucid Christians, a very hard blow.

As far as we know, the election of the new pope had been laborious. Faced with the inability of the cardinals to agree on a cardinal, Abbé Jean-François Arrighi, secretary to Cardinal Tisserant, passed from one group to another proposing the name of Cardinal Roncalli. The French cardinals were at first very reluctant, no doubt because of his age and the role he had played in 1953, as papal nuncio in France, in the affair of the worker-priests. Many thought that the time had come to make radical changes which required a determined and tenacious man. But, to avoid the election of a cardinal who was too conservative, they came to terms with the idea of an elderly, liberal pope, a "transitional pope. Finally, on October 20, the votes went to Cardinal Roncalli, who took the name of John XXIII. The news was not well received in French circles. At Saint-Louis des Français, in Rome, people grumbled against the choice of a

pope who was described as “senile”. But soon his “openness” was appreciated. “The new pope

192 - “Reclamation to the Holycrc”.///7/<r/f/r “n” 190. February 1975. p. 4 and sv.

193 - Against Cardinals Fcltin, Liénart and Gcrller, Cardinal Roncalli had made a negative report to Pope Pico XII on the priest-workers which certainly influenced the Holy See in favor of a

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is not an extremist,” writes Abbé du Pasquier, “and yet will change many things, especially in the Curia. “

On his way to the Conclave, Cardinal Roncalli had said: “The future pope will have many things to change. “This was the program of the new successor of Peter. On January 18, at St. Paul’s Outside the Walls, he announced the convocation of a council. Despite some of his writings recalling traditional doctrine, the tide was turning.

This change of direction gave wings to the neo-modernists and worried the defenders of Tradition, those who expected from the Pope the firmness and combat orders of a warlord. Father Calmel himself admitted, at the very beginning of Paul VI’s pontificate, that the election of John XXIII had touched him deeply:

I know more and more that the Lord will not abandon his Church, no matter who the Pope is; I know more and more that insufficient and enigmatic Popes (as Paul VI seems to be) are allowed by Jesus not to discourage us, but to make us redouble our faith and love and trust. I know this more

and more. That is why I do not feel broken, as I began to do in the time of John XXIII. His disarray did not have the fatal effect of discouragement or lack of hope. On the contrary, the acceleration of the modernist turmoil, the clouds that were gathering in the sky of the Church invited the religious to more prayer and reflection. Two documents from this period allow us to enter into Father Calmel's thinking. The first deals with religious life and obedience in times of heresy; the second concerns politics in France.

On April 11, 1959, Father Calmel composed a text, for personal use, which he entitled The religious state can become a school for the degradation of characters. First of all, he notes the sad abstention of the Dominican Order in the anti-communist struggle of the century:

Since 1945, communism has been progressing uninterruptedly, even if irregularly, in France and outside of France; and in France in a latent form, among clerical or lay Christians. The fact cannot be denied. Nor can it be denied that there is a religious order, the one that received me, destined to confound error and propagate sound doctrine.

However, since 1945 in France, the Order of St. Dominic, with rare exceptions, has not fought clearly and openly against Marxism.

(…) I am not saying that the Order in France is progressive, I am saying that it has not been the adversary that it should have been and that this risks being paid for.

While some lay people have openly defended the Church, for the Dominicans in France, it seems that taken as a whole

they have not really felt the danger. The result is that the Pugiles fidei by vocation and by office have remained outside the major struggle of the Holy Church for fifteen years.

What is the reason? Lack of fervor? Lack of docility to the Holy Father? Was it the naivety of quiet religious who had not experienced the Marxist horrors of the Liberation from near or far? All of these reasons played a role. But what allowed them to play, the means by which they took hold of people, is the conformism that so often spoils religious societies; any society, moreover, but religious society even more dangerously because it covers itself with supernatural motives (the vow of obedience) and because it deals with the sacred.

The convent of Montpellier in 1959 gives a sad example. My prior," he wrote, "does not admit that I have published in Itinéraires and especially that I have published in the Réponse aux révolutionnaires my criticisms of Marxism (...). I know, on the other hand, that I can count on almost no encouragement from brothers or superiors when I say or publish such elementary things. "

In such circumstances, the psychological weight, the magnetism of mcHmonn. im vèrinKlo d,>n<T^r noiir Is vi> relMensc and nnur faith :

Pride, harshness, inflexibility of character, this is very badly worn in almost all groupings, but especially in the religious grouping, I do not say for the rest that pride of character is in itself a virtue but I affirm that it is a normal and very valuable foundation for the virtuous, Christianly virtuous

life. I also affirm that such a disposition will only become virtuous if it is directed and purified. That is why the one who by function has the responsibility of forming his brothers in virtue, that is to say, the master of novices, when he finds himself in the presence of a harsh, proud and intractable character, should help him not to destroy these dispositions but to purify them. But this is not what usually happens. In general, the concern of the novice master is to make his disciple as flexible as a glove, bending to all conformities, incapable of ever opposing them. Other, more liberal masters of novices do not seek to lower the characters but let them go and each one deforms himself according to his inclination. The only good way to do this is not to extinguish, bind, paralyze and not to let go; the only good method consists in helping a character not to lose his pride but to have pride and irreducibility only in truth and in love

For the disciple of St. Thomas Aquinas, morality is not closed in on itself, it does not seek virtue for virtue's sake, but rather for the possession of God and his truth. It is in and through the truth that the will recovers; this is impossible if we do not show in what truth consists and what actions are in conformity with the truth. If this had been done, our Order in France would have opposed Marxism much more vigorously, and the characters would not have been debased into this conformism which goes, as they say, "in the direction of history".

Father Calmel's "mystical realism" found, in this tragic situation of the 1950s, a new concrete and crucial application. U was valid both for the present and for the future, Ü was prophetic. Even before the terrible upheavals of the years 1962-1970, the Dominican saw lucidly the formation that had to be given to young religious and seminarians to enable them to resist with firmness and

gentleness, for themselves and for their sheep, the assaults of the wolves.

French political life

Another aspect of Christian life preoccupied Father Calmel, that of French political life. We already know about his doctrinal developments on this question in Itinéraires, but we may be surprised to see this great

Roger-Thomas Calmel, this great theologian, this great praying man, to have such a precise knowledge of reality. A person of good will had sent him to Montpellier a book she had recently written. On his return, Father Calmel replied with a letter, dated July 18, 1959, in which his natural liveliness, his lucidity on the history of France for centuries, and even his intelligent and indulgent look at foreign countries appear. Here is a beautiful page of contemporary history.

Dear and very dear Miss,

You are killing me: you are definitely killing me.

No, I am not lucky. Back to my convent, finally, I come across your book (…) But why do I have to open it on this odious text, which is a perfect example of the most hypocritical liberalism, I mean the speech of Coty (René), of presidential memory, p, 281 ? (…) In this academic speech, not only is France not a baptized country (first lie) but also (second lie) France “has nothing to hide”, and finally (third lie) France “fully respects the dignity of the human person”.

I had just read in the train the courageous article of the French Nation of July 1, 1959, where Rene Huvez dared to

denounce the hypocrisy of the reform of the marriage of the Moslem women by Debré going hand in hand with the prodigious extension of the prostitution of the French women, encouraged by 1 State. (…) “France has nothing to hide.” (…If Coty (René) has grandchildren, if he comes to Montpellier on July 18 and if he has a minimum of respect for his family, he will have to start by hiding the daily life of the region; then, as he walks up the rue de la Loge, he will have to prevent his grandchildren from looking at the window of the bookstores: Finally, if by chance he goes to the suburbs of Boutonnet or Aiguelongue, he must be careful not to let them enter those vile slums which are a disgrace to Montpellier and to France, not so much because they exist, but because of the appalling price of their rent. Mr. Coty, I regret to point out to you that France, as much and more than other countries, is disfigured by hideous wounds of indecency and injustice, and that it often hides them. Often also by a revolting cynicism it exhibits them and it makes itself glory, and by there it poisons the world.

{.”) Freedom in France? I like it when Mr. Coty (René) opens his speech with variations on this theme. I would like to know if France is not the first country in Europe that not only paved the way for statism, for the totalitarian State, but that also legalized, legally consecrated the State monopolies. Who made the revolution, which consists, it is well known, in operating the impossible conjunction between the secularism of the institutions and the control of the State on the men and the

things? (…) Who was the first to introduce universal and compulsory conscription? Who was it who first pulverized

university freedoms and subjected education to state policy and administration? Who was the first to make true professional associations impossible? I would like to ask Mr. Coty if it was not the French State.

(…) You quote a certain Alfred Leroy who glorifies the iniquitous wars of the monster Bonaparte as if these wars were crusades, as if they had not aroused and exasperated the nationalistic pride of other countries and led France to two steps of the abyss, as if these wars had not deserved a solid detestation?

Finally, Mademoiselle, you know very well that France is the only country where “God came to do politics” as Frossard says; but also the only country where the one whom God had sent for the temporal (and spiritual) salvation of his own was burned by his own. (…) This gives me food for thought.

(…) Yes or no, is there great pity in the kingdom of France? And then, if I am proud to be French, that is not enough for me, even in the temporal sense: I have the desire for something other than France alone: I aspire that the old baptized nations and the nations that remain to be baptized try to form a Christianity…

The theologian therefore did not hesitate to go into the arena and give a few good swings of the sword. This, one can guess, did not attract only friends.

In this painful situation, he applied himself to generously fulfill the ministry entrusted to him, the confessions and the ordinary preaching. Thus, he was found in Auterive to preach the Lenten season of 1959. He obtained aid for poor families, such as the Spanish exiles he had met in Montpellier. However, the internal tensions of the community were not so great.

On our roads of exile

Written at the end of the summer of 1958, the book was approved by the Prior Provincial, Father Vincent de Paul Rande, on October 7, but it did not receive the Ximprimatur of the Diocese of Paris until January 4, 1960 and was published without delay by the Nouvelles Éditions Latines.

Several chapters in this book are simply repeats of articles that appeared in Itinéraires or even in previous books. The great interest of this new publication lies in its actuality. How can I continue on my way, on our roads of exile, which are rough, full of pitfalls, threatened by ferocious beasts, and keep the union with God, the peace and love that the Beatitudes promise?

How will the convinced Christian react to the pressure of the forces of evil, to the mockery and separation inherent in the witness of faith? 1 How will he be able to keep the union with God, the peace and love, the "bright and victorious smile" of childhood, when he knows "that the devil exists, that the world is old and dirty and that he kills souls", and that we ourselves are in great danger of "becoming dirty, old and perhaps losing our souls" (p. It will certainly not be by running away from the fight. For those who "habitually shirk the duties (and crosses) that life proposes to them", those who "miss the heartbreak that fidelity to Jesus Christ demands in the heart of their lives" fall into infantilism (p. 19).

In this path of trial, Saint Therese of the Child Jesus is a light that comes to us from Heaven. "The heart of the little Thérèse is on the scale of the strange horrors of the modern

world (p. 21). She understood better than anyone that “the devil is bent on making men old and very old”, the old age of discouragement and pusillanimity.

The main difficulty that the author recalls is that of the “dreadful solitude”, “the privilege of having to love without support and without intermediaries”, “the affective destitution (which) is undoubtedly the most radical and heartbreaking” that affects the one who preaches the truth loud and clear in the night of this world (ch. 2). Is he referring to his own situation? He seems to imply it when he calls for prayer “so that this privileged person - if he is called ourselves - will not shirk the honor that has been bestowed upon him.

utes of Exile, the Beatitudes, NEL, i960, i

In the end, the Beatitudes are a preaching on the cross, on the fruitful way of carrying the cross. See how St. Paul considers “the cross of the active or apostolic life” (ch. 3); “Contradictions outside, betrayals by friends or brothers, the heaviness of companions to be towed, the heartbreak of scandals that are always coming back, physical weariness…”. But all this is good for the kingdom of God. That is why St. Paul speaks of it in a “tone of valour”, with the “alluring manner (…) of a presentation at full speed”. He invites us not to worry, not to give up, not to “take refuge in some supernatural quietude”. The bitter sorrows of the great Apostle never succeeded in “shutting him up in an illusory, convenient and lazy prayer”.

Besides, the flight from the cross is illusory and plunges the soul into sadness (ch. 4). There are many reasons to be sad!

We remember such and such a person who had started out so well and who, after astonishing attempts, after heroic and relentless struggles, ended up giving up, doing what everyone else was doing, resigning himself, letting the desire for justice and holiness waver and die out. Discouraged, they may not have become downright evil, but they have given in to lukewarmness. As they say, they let it go: they still want to save themselves, but no more. This is the life of a great number of Christians.

The Beatitudes do not invite us to dismiss the cross and its derelictions, but to look at the invisible. The joy of the Gospel is born in the midst of the sadness of the struggle, not beside it. With it comes peace (ch. 5). Not the peace of those who do not want to be disturbed in anything, who “manage to be quite quiet”, but that of Jesus Christ, who is “peace in love and in the cross”.

This principle will come up very often in Father Calmel’s writings and in his talks on spiritual direction. If his message sounded like the trumpet of a general mobilization, he insisted on marrying the ardor and the wounds of combat with the profound peace of the soul. Combat is a requirement of love and must bear its features. Such was the great dilemma in which he found himself placed by events. He had to practice the new commandment of perfect charity in a time of war (ch. é). Faced with such an ideal, he felt his own weakness:

No doubt, the temptation to hate or despair is not the dreadful lot of every day of our life; but who can flatter himself that it is not the case?

In contact with the hell of mediocrity and baseness with which some of your brothers have accommodated themselves, are you ever sure that your instinctive uprightness and your passionate need for nobility and heroism will not turn to despair or hatred?If you suspect how the offenses of some beings can drive other beings back into themselves and suppress their ordinary means of communication; how some societies make it easy for fools and traitors to sabotage, humiliate, and injustice…

It is the experience that speaks here, it is the pain of a sensitive heart and a disappointed trust. What to do then? Where can we find a love that is stronger than hate! "…Then you will no longer doubt that only the Holy Spirit can give us the ability to love, and make sure that our emotional forces are not poisoned but remain young and pure. "

To keep the youthfulness and suppleness of the soul, "to walk with a contented heart", to sing the new hymn in the midst of the worst storms, such was the ideal that Father Calmel had set for himself, such was the direction he gave to souls. For this, Christian "realism" would not suffice, it is in the heart of God, in the mystical life that one will find joy and peace.

Now, in order to remain stable on this ridge, a great prudence is necessary for the apostle (ch. 10), one that puts his steps in those of the crucified Jesus, whatever the state of life to which the good Lord has destined him, the consecrated life (ch. 11) or marriage (ch. 12).

Throughout his work, Father Calmel shows himself to be particularly sensitive to the persecutions, to the maneuvers of "sabotage, humiliation, injustice" orchestrated by the men of the Church, by the "false brothers" of whom Saint Paul speaks. As such. On Our Roads of Exile is a reflection of

the growing tension that troubled Christianity at the end of the 1950s and that would lead to the great upheavals inaugurated by the Second Vatican Council.

In such a situation :

What to do? (...) To hide so much vileness from yourself, to evade the suffering that bites you, to evolve in the midst of the Pharisees by resigning yourself, by giving them a soft, indulgent and good-natured smile, in reality a half-complacent smile? It is still a solution of pusillanimity.

On the contrary, it is time to raise our gaze to the mystery of the Church, which is holy but composed of sinners, and to set out on our journey (ch. 13). Only faith in the holiness of the Bride of Christ will enable the faithful defender of the truth to overcome the scandal:

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Who is not ready to carry the cross with a civur üenfant nêsl iiiniiiis entered at the bottom of the m-stère of the Church. {...) There remains only one normal attitude, that of giving one’s life with the greatest possible purity in the imitation of a Catherine of Siena or a Therese of the Child Jesus.

These are the instructions for spiritual life in times of upheaval and ptrsecudon that Father Calmel gave to himself and that he distilled in the course of his writings and preaching. Their providential character, in 19’)9, three years before the opening of the Vatican 11 Council, was clearly evident. This light, born of a long and painful experience, was meant to enlighten and encourage priests and the faithful in the midst of the approaching turmoil.

It suffices to read the Catholic press of that time, especially after 1958, to grasp the abyss that separated Father

Calmel's ideal from the thought and preaching of a great number of his brothers in religion and from the Church of France. In the Dominican convent of Montpellier, this opposition took on unbearable proportions. The prior himself reproached his subordinate for toasting communism, while he let the most ih'oiutionary fathers speak and write. The latter never lost an opportunity to denigrate their confrere and marginalize him. When one remembers Father Calmel's very poor health and the delicacy of his sensibility, one understands that the situation would soon become untenable. This is the reason, it seems, which decided the recall of the Father to the Sainte-Baume.

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Back to Saint Mary Magdalene

At the end of 1959, Father Calmel returned to the good weather and the lu/Ymièrcs of Provence and especially to the mysterious presence of Saint Mary Magdalene. This time, he would not stay at the grotto but at the Sainte-Baume hotel, located at the foot of the mountain. He particularly enjoyed the "extraordinary view of the Sainte-Victoire. What a beautiful name for a beautiful mountain. "The majestic setting, the silence and peace of the place, the primacy of contemplation that characterizes this house, but also the care of pilgrims in search of truth, of God's mercy or of prayer would allow him to breathe a little and deepen his interior life.

Ecclesiology

His reflection at that time seems to have been focused on two main objects. The first is the theology of the Church.

As the innovators spread their theories on subjects such as communism, ecumenism, and existentialist philosophy, it

became increasingly clear that the great truth being sought was that of the nature of the Church. We remember that Father Congar and his friends had founded the Unam Sanctam collection, published by Le Cerf, precisely to radically change Catholic ecclesiology. This teaching worried Rome. In 1954, the Pope demanded that the three priors of the French provinces of the Dominican Order be deposed and that the principal singers of neo-modernism (Fathers Chenu, Congar, Féret, Boisselot) be removed. The sandons, which were very benign and pronounced with the tip of the lips by the Master General, Father Suarez, did not prevent them from continuing their work. Father

Congar wrote of his intention to prolong and even intensify the “resistance”:

To continue to write as much as possible in the same direction, using all the still free chances. This is my main struggle. I know (and “they” know!) that in the long run, everything I say and write is the negation of the system. Yes, that is my real struggle: in my theological, historical, ecclesiological and pastoral work. The course I am giving at the moment, from Ecclesia, exactly as if nothing had happened, that is a real answer, that is my real dynamite under the scribes’ chair!

Rejecting the traditional doctrine of the mystical body of Christ, as recently recalled by the encyclical Mystki corporis (1943), he advocated the notion of “Church-communion”. The Council, he said later, “refused to express itself in physical terms of members, preferring to use the category of communion, thus meaning that one can be more or less in

communion. This distinction has important ecumenical consequences.” Ecclesiology was increasingly at the heart of the debates and was to take on a primary role during the course of Vatican Council 11.

Father Calmel found the opportunity to express traditional thought in the publication of a book by the German Jesuit Karl Rahner, in 1959, of which he made a detailed review in the magazine Itinéraires ””. The Dominican’s text is particularly interesting insofar as it puts his finger, two years before the opening of the Second Vatican Council, on one of its most manifest novelties, the new ecclesiology. Moreover, this review attracts attention as a model of Christian criticism and polemic.

First of all, the author approaches this new book with benevolence. It is indeed a discovery for him:

I do not know Karl Rahner; I have never had those face-to-face talks with him which are generally more conducive to clearing up misunderstandings than long written discussions. In any case, if I misinterpret his thought, I hope he will excuse me. (...) Let him not imagine that

196 - *Fr. Leprieur, Quand Rome condamne, Plon*Ccrf, 1989. quoted in Vatican II, l’Église à h croisée des chemitts, 1.1, éditions du MJCF, 2010, p. 142.

199-/nflfVfl/r«n‘44,jL l960.p.7l-79. ^

I do not think that he is a good Christian and an orthodox theologian. I believe that he was wrong, but I do not consider myself more infallible than he is.

One sees h delicacy towards people and scientific scruples. One would not want to rush into reading this book with preconceived ideas and make false judgments. Father Calmel even begins his reading with a favorable prejudice:

He must be a Germanic theologian; therefore, his thought will undoubtedly not lack density, even if it is sometimes obscure; and furthermore, it risks being stimulating, since these Germanics either say things that we Latins do not say, or else, by saying the same things in another form, they force us to reconsider them.

However, the truth has absolute rights, and the theologian makes "an intelligent reading of the book, one that goes to the heart of the author's teaching. First of all, he is gently surprised that Rahner does not mention in any place the encyclical Humantgeneris of Pope Pius XII "which deals precisely with the dangers to Catholicism of 'some false opinions which threaten (it is indeed a danger) to ruin the foundations of Catholic doctrine'. Is this silence on such an important document not surprising from a theologian î Isn't theology at the service of the Church's magisterium ™?

After this important remark of method, Father Calmel enters into the heart of the matter, the definition of the Church, Rahner sees in it "two realities (...) which cannot be strictly conceived as two aspects of one and the same thing".

It is true that he does well to note the existence, in the Christian life, of "the sphere of the private from above", that is to say, the world of charisms, but is it necessary to break the Church into two halves? (.") I think that the Church is indivisibly a community of grace provided with the

pioprc of theology. He would soon confirm this in the introduction to his article on Christ the King in Itmrrdim,

September 1961, when he wrote: “The mystery of Christ the King is a mystery on which we can rely {…) It is therefore essential to start from Revelation as it is contained in Scripture. Hereit what CSC cxpl*L.ctt p-r k notably by the Encyclical Qtutspri7”,is. In rcHcchis

powers of order and jurisdiction and that it is wrong to divide it into two parts which constitute two different realities, one part being “the community of grace”, the other part “the juridically structured society” (p. 34). The Church is indivisibly a community of grace endowed with the powers to preach, govern, and give the sacraments (including confession).

Consequently, what can disappoint or even shock us in this or that man of the Church, “is not the Church, even from the juridical point of view: it is the part of the world and of sin in a minister of the Church. Certainly, it is necessary to oppose the “ecclesiastical statism” of certain clerics, but in order to do so i

It is necessary to teach a certain moral attitude, an attitude of humility and charity, and not to elaborate a speculative theory of the Church divided into two different realities. (…) The conflict cannot be overcome by considering the interior life on the one hand, and the “juridical” means by which it is given birth and growth on the other, as two alien universes. (…) Rahner says in substance: the mystical life of the Christian is not the responsibility of the minister of grace insofar as he exercises a juridical function, because the

Church is split in two: juridical apparatus, community of love. (…)

In the Church we are united by charity, which is given to us by baptism, nourished by the Eucharist, enlightened by preaching, expressed by works, and which tends to bring about a certain form of civilization. Thus, even considering the Church from the point of view of charity, I do not arrive at the concept of an invisible Church.

As a good Thomist, Father Calmel goes back to the principles, to the reason for this union in a single society of this invisible aspect and the visible aspect, that is "the Word of God incarnate, the Son of God made visible":

"Someone can (says Karl Rahner), depending on the circumstances, belong to the community of grace of the redeemed in Christ without being a member of the visible Church, legally organized as such"

(p. 33). To say this is to ignore the effects of the baptism of desire.

For if someone, in virtue of baptism of desire, becomes a member of the mystical body of Christ (…), he is by this very fact a member of the body of the visible Church: the mystical body being no other reality than the visible Church. There is a rigorous superposition of the notions of visible Church and mystical body. (…) From the moment that he lives by the grace of the baptism of desire, he carries in his heart a tendency which inclines him, not towards any confession, (…) but towards the Church founded on Peter.

This is why he who is a member of the visible society without being in érat Jtgtàce, and therefore who is “separated from the community of gtâce” (Rahner, op. cit., [1,33), can go to Mass, listen to the preaching, and even go to confession. The worst Rahner says is that “the sphere of the private above or within (the natural and interior life) is not directly and essentially touched by the Church as an organized society” (Rahner, op. cit., p. 37). But if,” Father Calmel replies with a certain indignation, “prayer, intimate prayer, the most spiritual recollection are touched, are awakened and sustained by doctrine, (…) by the liturgy (…), by Eucharistic communion, in short by the Church as an organized society.

He then presented two examples that were dear to him, that of Saint Joan of Arcet and that of Saint John of the Cross. The fidelity of both of them to their respective vocations was supported by “the Church in all that it comprises of ‘juridical’”, by its teaching and by its sacraments, in spite of the oppositions of the men of the Church. And he concludes; he thinks that the Church, with all that it comprises of juridical, is a divine society and that, by this very fact - unlike other societies - it establishes itself at the level of the secret of hearts, at the level of the mystical life of the person. (…) In other words, the more interior, mystical and spiritual Christians are, the more they escape the spirit of the world, even when it is at work in the ministers of the Church, but also when they live from the Church and through the Church, including the Church in its “juridical” aspect.

This finale was almost prophetic in scope, since it gave the line of conduct for Catholics in the crisis that was to strike the Church in the years to come. A decade later, Father Calmel would devote a long series of articles to this question

in the review Itinéraires and in the seventh chapter of the Mysteries of the Kingdom of Grace (vol. 1), in 1972.

The political situation and the chance of reading were to open up another field of reflection for Father Calmel, that of revolutionary technique. On this subject, he had already expressed himself on the occasion of his meditations on XApocalypse. With ainijean, he had seen the Dragon, the demon, at work in the world through the deified political power and through the game of philosophy. He would have

203 - Cc$ arciclcs scrom subsequently published in a

teï;fl “n,Difralivrc, 1987.

“A work by M. Brhe, an apology for the Church of

could have left it at that. The revolution would be sufficiently explained by demonic powers, by unnatural theories and by a few men who would preach them everywhere. However, such an explanation runs up against an obstacle. These “doctrinaires”, these false prophets, if they are only individuals, can only have influence on individuals. Agere sequitm esse, notes the philosopher, the action follows the being. So that the subversive action has a political range, it needs a support which corresponds to its end, it is necessary that it is carried out by one or several societies. Now, this last element, Father Calmel discovered it while reading Augustin Cochin. In an article of May 1960, he confesses with great simplicity his ignorance and the discovery he made thanks to the French political writer.

Once again, the method followed by the author shows his intellectual caution. First of all, he discovers a truth and invites his reader to admire it with him. Then he deepens it so as not to lose anything. Then, he shows its limits, which is the spirit of a just criticism. Finally, he puts the studied doctrine back in its place in the world of knowledge to highlight the enrichment it brings to the field he deals with. This review should be read carefully, insofar as it signifies an important evolution in Father Calmel's thinking. He will often have the opportunity, in the future, to develop his reflection on this subject and he will find a painful verification in the events within the Church.

This historian is very great. This heroic Christian who fell before the enemy at the foot of a calvary on the Somme in 1916^" must be held

- Marie-MadeU

capable of making men walk without them noticing and of reading the strings without them being aware of it.

What is it about î They are the "societies of thought whose purpose was not to tlietclier and to say the truth, but to discuss to discuss and to launch the ideas -gmore advanced", as one already said ". The system of (jnutage) was set up by "some followers who would not occupy the first positions but who, skilfully hidden, would know (...) to make believe that the people or the Biiondemand and wanted this or that". It is "the implicit fabrication of the collective thought", of the famous public opinion. "Communism has perfected the work and the method, it has

made it dialectical, but it was conceived and set up at the end of the 18th century. “

However, this truth has its limits. Here again, realism keeps its rights. If a pure political theory, a spirit, cannot last and bear fruit half embodied in persons and societies, the reverse is true. The play of the best organized secret societies that one supposes them could not make the revolution if these organizations are not animated by a thought and by Jrs thinkers.

Augustin Cochin does not tell the whole story. He does not show enough the part played by the subversive doctrinaires and their major responsibility in the revolution.

In particular, it does not show enough that the genius of Rousseau, at once dissolving and fertile in the anti-natural, played a role of the first order. (…) The fact remains that the revolution would not have been made as quickly, nor as violently, nor as uniformly without the mechanics of societies and clubs. Cochin is quite right to emphasize their action. It cannot be said, however, that they are the principle of the revolution. It is Taine who is right, whatever Cochin says, when he places the supreme cause of the revolution in the personalities of foolish doctrinaires or perverse men of action.

These two points of view are complementary and must therefore be united in a superior synthesis;

Only to bad personalities the societies of thought and the clubs conferred a power of evil never yet equaled. On this point Augustin Cochin was quite right and his discovery is extremely valuable. It amounts to saying that there is an artificial and unnatural system of grouping and association through which lies and wickedness (…) receive a destructive

power which far exceeds the power in evil of a single person, or even of an evil society of the classical type (...).

We have already spoken of societies possessed by the devil because their institutions are contrary to natural law. We must add: society is even more possessed by the devil when the anti-natural element (which is as old as the world) is given over to the communist dialectic; or to that sketch of a dialectic which in the eighteenth century was represented by the thinking societies

This article shows how Father Calmel's thinking on the techniques of the Revolution grew richer over the years and helped him to protect the souls who entrusted themselves to him from the venom of subversion. Much later, in December 1973, he recommended to a Dominican woman who came to visit him, among the subjects that the sisters could study together, "the reading (with commentary) of some aphorisms from the small collection of Coehin i Realism politique, or of some pages from his more important collection (posthumous) Lu sociétés de pensée et la démocratie. "

The defense of truth and religious life as well as the formation of young Catholic girls in the 20th century passed through it. We can see how Father Calmel's reflection remained close to his time and to the souls to be saved. Wherever he went, according to the nature of his audience, he tried to fix souls in God by solid theological virtues and to protect them against the present wiles of the devil.

For the clergy and the apostolate of the written word did not make him mute. During Holy Week in 1960, the preacher

was seen and heard in Villeneuve-Minervois (Aude). At the beginning of July, he attended for the first time the tenth annual congress of the Catholic City, in Issy-les-Moulineaux, which brought him many contacts and precious friends. He was able to meet Dom Roux, Father Abbot of Fontgombault, the Benedictines Dom Guillou (Abbey of La Source, Paris) and Dom Frénaud (Abbey of Solesmes), Abbot Luc Lefebvre, General Weygand, Henri Massis, Admiral Auphan, Jean de Fabrègues - director of La France Catholique - and other personalities.

207 - “Les travaux d’Augustin Coehin”, Itinéraires n” 1960, p. 108*111.

208 - In 1936. Jean Oussci, then twenty-two years old, found himself with some friends (among them Jean Masson and some young officers) at the home of Abbé Choulot in Monialza (Montauban). On August 13, 1939, fifteen days before the outbreak of war, they decided to found a group that would have

J. Ousset founded an embryonic work, the “Center for Critical Study and Synthesis” with the support of Dom Frénaud, master of studies at Solesmes. The first number of the review l’herbe appears in 1946. Ld

Back to Saint Mary Magdalene

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He was invited to preach at the mass on Saturday, July 2. Here is the report that the magazine Verbe dbetobre-November 1960 made of it:

Sing the glory of the Lord at all times: the lesson of the Magnificat carries within it this simplicity of the sublime.

Is not the essential goal of our life in this continual praise of the one who maintains us in being and who gives meaning to all reality? The spiritual son of St. Dominic exalts in Mary the one who, of all creatures, best understood the Magnificat and did not cease to sing it, in the pains of Calvary as well as on the day of her glorious assumption.

To seek in all things the glorification of our heavenly king: this is the supreme goal that should be recalled, as Father Calmel did with great talent, at the heart of our work centered on the organization of society with this end in view.

From August 17 to September 5, Brother Preacher made his first study session in Pontcallec. He treated the most varied subjects: commentaries on passages of Holy Scripture: theology of the Redemption, of Christ the King and of the Church; the study of the “pure means” in Don Quixote (Cervantes) and in the Songs of Gestures; questions of current events (liturgical malfunctions, psychology); reading of some authors (Pascal, Corneille, Bernanos, Thibon, Péguy); even the history of Brittany

The variety of the subjects treated and their elevation clearly show the extent of the doctrinal work of Father Calmel and the depth of his thought.

He wrote about the “social kingship of Our Lord Jesus Christ”. Since 1950, the CilécoMi^uc was very badly seen by the most influential French bishops and by Catholic Action. In 1958, Jean Ousset lost many of his friends by refusing to take a stand against the new constitution of the Godless Republic.

Jclanouvelle messe, Jean Ousset refused to take a position, using his status as a simple layman as a pretext. W - Father Calmel summarized his thought: The soul of man is deeper

than his psychology. 11 CSC very true that the psychology of some is disturbed - what is not in agreement jitcl'àmc - "disturbed by shocks and scandals that date from early childhood. - It is true that this disturbance can poison the whole psychology and persuade someone that he is a monster. - But the remedy is not in psychoanalysis. These torn or poisoned beings undermine the peace when someone more solid, more mature is close enough to them to allow them to open up - to allow them to face their wound, to assume it, to stop identifying with their more or less sick psychology. What heals is the jugogical awareness thanks to someone who takes charge and who allows the inner Tuniic to come out: it is not the psychoanalytical awareness.

mikttons.

Moreover, it was during that summer of 1960 that he met a young woman from Lorraine who was to become his spiritual daughter and the occasion for his apostolate in what he would later call "the Eastern Marches. Yvette Évratd had heard about the Sainte-Baume from a friend. She went there for the first time on July 24, for a rest and prayer cure. As she was sitting in the bus that was taking her from Marseille to Plan d'Aups, she saw this little Dominican man getting on, carrying two large bags with difficulty. On arrival, Father Calmel offered her to participate in the Mass he had not yet celebrated. The girl accepted, but she was surprised. "Father must be pretty tired," she thought as the Mass went on, "he forgets a lot of things!" It was not a matter of distractions, but simply the Dominican rite of Mass, which the girl had never attended before,

The next day, as he was walking in the early afternoon, the retreatant was sitting on a bench at the edge of the woods. Don't stay there," said the good Father, "you'll bring back ticks… And then, what is this book? You don't seem to be interested in what you are reading! "Indeed, Mr. Evratd did not find much spiritual nourishment in the book he had been lent, and an appointment was made for the next day, and for every day of this long five-week stay. This was the starting point of a spiritual direction which was to last until the death of Father Calmel and which, according to his own expression, became a true spiritual brotherhood.

The noose is tightening

If the servant worked valiantly in the Master's vineyard, the enemy did not sleep. A new reproach, in fact, was going to strike him in June of that year 1960.

After the sanction that had hit him in November 1954 and which forbade him to work with the Dominican teaching sisters of the Holy Name of Jesus, Father Calmel had legitimately kept up epistolary exchanges with some sisters. In particular, he kept up an abundant correspondence with Mother Hélène. She even had some letters typed up and forwarded to such and such a mother who wished to receive them. However, the opposition to Father Calmel and his spirit had lost none of its intensity. Among the fathers, first of all, the situation was becoming more and more tense. They were too enthusiastic about the innovative ideas to be able to stand the contradiction any longer. Among the teaching sisters, a few were turning more and more to the world. For them, it was absolutely necessary to reject and forget all that the Dominican had brought to the congregation. To the

he will send them to me alone, and I will be the intermediary, with the full responsibility of the pure and simple obedience that I too owe to the orders of Rome. (…)

I beg you to look at things only from the point of view of obedience, that is, from the point of view of God. It is the highest authority to which religious are subject who has spoken. (…)

God asks us through his Church to renounce the influence of Father Calmel.

The victim of these slanderous measures was never questioned as in 1934. He never had the opportunity to defend himself. These were exceptional measures. And nowhere was there any question of truth or of any substantive reason. Rather, it seemed to be an attempt to camouflage an arbitrary decision under beautiful considerations about obedience, about unity, about Rome and about the Church.

11 can be cruel, it can be imprudent to take away a mission from a man gifted by God to accomplish it and who has given himself entirely to it.

This is never fair, because none of us has the right to it. (…) We can, we must remain faithful in soul, heart and prayer to those who have done us good. But not a fidelity of obedience and dependence. You have been told too much about obedience in all that has happened. You should also have spoken of detachment, of spiritual poverty, of trust in God. Otherwise, you would have built on the human, not on the supernatural.

It would be easy to point out the various sophisms that pepper this letter. It is more interesting to understand the general idea. Since the beginning of the pontificate of John XXIII, the movement which had taken off after the war was growing in scope. Everywhere, and in the Dominican Order perhaps more than elsewhere, radical reforms were being prepared. For this to happen, a monolithic unity was necessary. Only an unfailing obedience and an unwavering cohesion would ensure the success of the transformations in view. That is why a congregation that would escape the general movement, now considered irreversible, and nuns who would disassociate themselves from the new developments to form a separate group within the Dominican order, was unbearable. The mission of Father Nicolas and the sanctions which had hit Father Calmel were basically doctrinal. Father Nicolas had to form the sisters “intellectually”, to ensure a “doctrinal influence”, especially “among the youngest”. In spite of the arbitrary severity of such a measure, it was not thought advisable to forbid Father Calmel any contact with Mother Helene. The moral authority of the former Superior General did not allow the Roman authorities to deprive her completely of the support of her spiritual father. It was primarily through her that Father Calmel would now have news of his Dominican daughters. However, the authorities of the congregation would show a certain flexibility in the application of this ban.

The religious received this new blow with a remarkable supernatural sense - ‘h The advice he gave to his spiritual daughters reflected his own interior life very well: “In conditions well suited to extinguish it,” he told them, “you must keep the flame of love burning” and maintain “the heart wide awake in conditions conducive to sleep and slow death. It is always the parable of the virgins. Every Christian is called to

212 - “I am so sure,” he said on April 22, 1961, “that Jesus has done well to take the path he has chosen in order to teach me to prefer it - to increase my faith in the holy Church - to help me and to understand the immense distress in the world - in a word, to help me

to live it. “In the trial that visited him and that reached certain souls, the religious clearly felt the danger of “letting weariness enter his soul, and discouragement”. To avoid this, it was necessary “above all not to take the present situation tragically.

In spite of everything, without the slightest withdrawal and without bitterness, Father Calmel continued his ministry peacefully - for example, in June and October he accompanied pilgrimages to Lourdes, then preached a conference to about fifty men on the mystery of Christ the King -, endeavoring to relieve those who came to him and even organizing material aid to some destitute families. He who was rejected by his brothers found the right words to lift up souls. His correspondence, at that painful time, invites his readers to be “simple and joyful”, “to accomplish the works of faith” which “consist above all in a childlike confidence, courageous and light, and in a love that is put into action”. At all times, they must “bless and sing^’*”, “be free of their moods^”’. Stay small, light and singing; watch for sleep and nervous balance^”.

It is certain that love, and love alone, gives a wisdom, a peace, a calm, a possibility of Christian reflection, an understanding of beings, a strength to bless in the trial that

one does not find outside. But love is beyond what we may or may not experience; and above all it is based on faith-‘*.

Let us remain light and singing, because - whatever it is - the Lord who is almighty is also infinitely tender to us, and he arranges everything so that we may love him perfectly ■’*.

It was with this surge of joy and interior freedom that Father Calmel overcame the persecution of men and looked to the future.

218 - Leitrc of October 27.

219 - Letter of October 28, 1961.

17

The convent of Biarritz

Father Calmel’s stay at the Sainte-Baume was very beneficial to him.

However, the common life there was reduced to its simplest expression. That is why the religious was happy to be appointed on November 3, 1960, to the convent in Biarritz (9 avenue Victor-Hugo). He remained there until 1964.

There, he found a larger community composed of fathers capable of understanding him. The prior, especially Father Perret, won his natural esteem and admiration. After his death on February 22, 1964, the newcomer wrote of him the following moving words:

The dear Father was taken away within three days. He left us on Saturday 22nd, for the Chair of St. Peter. He loved the Church and the Pope very much. He was an apostle of

extraordinary dedication, surely the best Father in our convent. It was with him that I was most happy to talk. He was mature. He was a priest without the slightest self-reflection; I prayed to him like a saint. What a pain! We will be consoled by the certainty that he will be in paradise and that he will intercede for us.

As soon as he arrived in Biarritz, Father Calmel began his Dominican ministry. One may be surprised by the strength and audacity with which he addressed the faithful of the convent. On November 27, the first Sunday of R.Lvent, he spoke to them as follows:

My brothers.

In what situation are we, the disciples, commanded to lift our eyes to the Lord? In the unimaginable situation that will be the end of time. (…)

For we must not imagine that the world, as it approaches its end, will have made extraordinary progress in fidelity to God, the practice of justice and the establishment of a civilization worthy of man. The Church, against which the forces of hell will not be able to prevail, will experience, as never before, being abandoned and betrayed by her own children. (…)

But why, Lord, (…) do you allow these days of distress, scandal and apostasy? (…) It is so that the Church may give her Spouse a response of perfect love, so that she may show her fidelity in the most unlikely perils and difficulties and so that she may prove by this very fact how fervently she is attached to her Spouse.

Evil is always at work around us and in us; the devil is not idle; the Antichrist is already at work among you, said Saint John to the first Christians (I Jn 2:18). It would be very difficult for us to delude ourselves about this. Our daily experience is convincing enough. We all know that we can only persevere in faith, hope and charity through a hard battle. (…)

The proof is sent or extended to us so that we can give more love.

This is how a Dominican could still preach in November 1960. One can guess, however, that such severity of language, such a spirit that was not in conformity with the messages of irenicism and ecumenism that were being received from everywhere, did not please everyone.

However, souls of good will could not help but be carried away by the preacher's elevation. It was his deeply contemplative soul that expressed itself freely and carried his listeners away to God. His Christmas homily of that year 1960, for example, is conceived as a prayer to

2; December 1960 to January 3, 1961. It was an opportunity for him to visit several Parisian shrines and to meet some of the editors of Itimirts. May we, in this magazine," he noted, "continue to make beautiful tnral in the impossible times that are ours" Then he returned to Biarritz

In order to resume the life of contemplation and study which was so dear to him and to continue the ministry of preaching (sermons in parishes, several retreats), I said - and I see it better and better - that Mary is our mother of grace (…). She

is entirely given to intercede for the spiritual life of all her children because of her consent at the Annunciation and on Calvary. Let us live as her children, tender, trusting and joyful “*.

From March 16 to April 2, 1961, he was at the Sacred Heart parish in Millau to preach Holy Week.

The situation in France did not leave Father Calmel unconcerned. In April, he composed an unpublished text on “the capitulation of the military” which shows his deep concern for the future of the country.

In May, he criticized the Debré law on education which attacked free education. In fact, the growing control of the State gave reason to the warnings that Father Cilmel had never stopped uttering and to his realism. For, in the final analysis, if a Christian education was not given in the Catholic school, even in secular subjects, if faith and charity did not inspire all school life down to the smallest details, why should the State be refused the right to take charge, at least indirectly through contracts, of the programs, the books, the choice and the training of teachers? If teaching and education are in fact separated, then let us leave the former to the State and the latter to the families and the parish. The only adequate response to the government’s claims on the school and on Ib little Christians is the intimate union between nature and grace, between the teaching of all disciplines and the faith, between the life of every moment and the supernatural ckarity. This is once again “mystical realism”.

At the same time, no doubt because of the increasingly alarming situation in Algeria and the clumsiness of the government, Father Calmel began his work on Islam. First of

all, it was a review of the book by Hanna Zacharias (who was none other than Father Théry o.p., who died in 1959),

Î20-Letter dated January 9, 1961.

121-Lcttrc of ISfévricr 1961.

222 Itineraim n” 53. May 1961. p. 26-33.

Father Roger-Thomas Calmel

L’Islam et ta critique historiijue, then Vrai Mohammed et faux Coran and finally De Mdüe à Mohammed (two volumes). The thesis exposed in these works is the following: “The religious teaching which is at the origin of Islam is the work of a Jewish rabbi who wanted to convert the idolatrous Arabs to Judaism, by turning them away from the Christian religion. “Father Calmel does not pretend to judge a subject which he hardly knows, but he considers these discoveries with a very apostolic orientation. The great sin of France was not to want to convert the Muslims of the colonies. This would be, even today, the great emergency. Now this “evangelical desire” requires “charity towards people, lucidity, absence of illusion with regard to doctrines. “Consequently, “one of the first conditions for Muslims to receive the faith is that they no longer have any illusions about the origin and nature of what they consider to be the book par excellence.

He returned to the subject a few months later, in the form of a dialogue (real or fictitious?) with a priest he met on the train. “A dialogue full of strength and finesse, an enchantment for the spirit,” Jacques Vier-* told him. As usual, the theologian closes the debate with an elevation on “adoration in spirit and in truth”. For this he quoted the letter of Charles de Foucauld to Henri de Castries dated July 15, 1901:

The foundation of love, of adoration, is to lose oneself, to sink into what one loves and to look upon everything else as nothing. Islamism

And I begged to go to the end of this vocation; to let myself be made by the living truth of the Lord, to be a messenger of this truth, of this truth that is not separated from love.

Her spiritual life is also manifested in a prayer to St. Clare, composed for Sister Marie-Claire on her feast day, August 1:

Saint Clare, you loved the Lord and trusted him to the point of choosing absolute poverty and founding an order where one lives from day to day.

Your faith in the Blessed Sacrament was so strong that, by the virtue of the Eucharist, you repelled the attacks of the Saracens and routed them.

I rejoice in the wonders that the Lord has brought to light in your frailty and I address my humble prayer to you:

Obtain for me to live in evangelical poverty, to be rid of all occupation with myself, to be abandoned to the love of Jesus for the present and for the future, to commune with such great faith in the body of the Lord that he deigns to grant me the total victory of faithfulness and love.

Father Calmel remained with the Dominican Sisters of the Holy Spirit until September 6. During his stay in Morbihan, he gave classes (“which were very successful, to the pupils

of the sisters who were very open and eager”) and preached the Assumption in a parish in Lorient. Very happy with his “marvelous” ministry in Pontcallec, he returned to Biarritz where he resumed conventual life and preaching. He radiated over the whole of Béarn and beyond. For the feast of All Saints, he helped a parish priest in the countryside of Assarac. The parishes are neglected,” he wrote, “partly because the priests who do not have a sense of the Mass cannot give it. The church is neglected for the same reasons. (…) On the other hand, the parish priest is overwhelmed: four parishes is far too many. “

At the end of November, the first Sunday of Advent once again directs her thoughts and preaching to the great mystery of the end of time. For, beyond the Savior’s advent at Christmas, the Church wants us to meditate and await his coming in the Parousia. Now, one of the signs that the end of the world is approaching is the progress of diabolical works: “As mankind approaches the end, the devil perfects his methods of leading it astray. “And in his meditation, Father Calmel cannot forget “the prisoners and exiles who will not have a family to celebrate Christmas with”.

In February 1962, the son of St. Dominic gave a review in the review Itineraim which deserves special attention. Two books by Jacques Vier”’ allowed him to return to the subject of literature, which he loved so much, and to respond to an objection that those who read his writings may have: that of the quotation of authors who are not very “recommendable”.

The author begins by rejoicing in the critical spirit of Jacques Vier:

Here come to me now two small books of criticism, admirable of health and perfectly unharmed by the conformisms of the day as regards literature. (...)

(Rolin, Jugnet. Vier) The French University is always proud to have solid minds, friends of the truth, free men who do not worry about following fashion and who do not renounce to lead the Christian fight. (For one finds, in particular in Jacques Vier), a criticism which does not lack criteria, - those essential criteria, but nowadays generally despised, which represent a healthy sensitivity, the good sense, the instinct of the faith, the doctrinal formation.

In this place, he addresses the delicate question of the citation of authors, and he explains his own way of working:

Someone once asked me if it was out of virtue that I quoted, in journal articles, authors who usually are not quoted together and who even seem to ignore each other. I answered that “virtue” had nothing to do with my case. (...) I had no reason to be silent about those to whom I was indebted; on the other hand, I did not quote randomly and in a concordism that drowned everything in all, I had some principles of discernment behind me, which I hold from the Dominican Thomistic school and from the political doctrine of the popes.

This method is in fact that of Saint Thomas Aquinas.

soSm that the common Doctor quotes from the most foreign authors in the Church,

and put it to rest in the immediate vicinity of the chapel.

Xergne in aolt 1962, during the presence of Father Calme

cnL\ that he puts in scene, but the process counts on the critical spirit of the reader “it is completely faithful to the great Masters of Thomism.

îtiUjardde Chardin

Another subject was to hold Father Calmel’s attention from that time on until the end of his life. At the beginning of 1962, he was invited to express his opinion on a doctrine very much in vogue among Catholic intellectuals, that of the Jesuit Teilhatd de Chardin. The subject interested the Dominican theologian in a particular way, that of novelty. Until now, he had attacked, on the one hand, those who advocated a nature (the teaching of profane subjects, science, the city) separated from grace or, on the other hand, those who escaped into a spirituality in a pure state, disconnected from real life. In the name of his “mystical realism”, the disciple of St. Thomas had indignantly rejected these separations and any kind of “juxtaposition”. Henceforth, he found himself in the presence of a new caricature of the Christian life, that of a confusion between nature and grace, of an abolition of boundaries and distinctions.

To tell the truth, the question was not entirely unknown to him. His first contact with the Jesuit paleontologist was in 1942 or 1943, when a “theologian” gave him a text by Teilhard entitled Comment je mis. From the outset, Father Calmel had discerned the confusion that was hidden in his prose between the order of creation and that of redemption:

Thus no clear break, no irreducible distinction between the orders. No absolute beginning, no absolute intervention

of man, for the redemption of the human race. So there you have it “corn To Father Teilhard de Chardin affirming that “man emerged from a general groping of the earth. He was born in a direct line, from a total effort of life”, Father Calmel answered first of all in three points:

- beech is hierarchical; it is not a single, infinitely huge and malleable substance.

- In the created world, the highest degree of the lower rank prepares the lowest degree of the higher rank. But there is no natural transition from one to the other.

- Man has a definite nature, composed substantially of a soul and a body, a definite state of fall and redemption which grace does not make him leave. It does not make him pass to the state of the “ultra-human”.

In April of the same year, 1962, Father Calmel deepened his study of the works of Teilhard de Chardin. In doing so, he was once again right, and his language had something prophetic about it. Six months before the opening of the Vatican 11 Council, at the height of the preparatory work, he was stigmatizing what was to become its thought, if not explicitly formulated, then at least diffuse and omnipresent. A book had just appeared. Construire U terre, which offered an anthology of Father Teilhard’s message. A rare privilege, the French text was followed, in the same book, by English, German, Russian and Arabic translations. Obviously, the widest possible distribution was intended.

It is as a theologian that Father Calmel approaches the texts. He begins by being surprised by “certain extraordinary particularities” of the work he is studying. Indeed, there is “not a single quotation from the Holy Scriptures, the Fathers and the Councils”. Moreover, one of the fundamental

principles of Catholic theology is not mentioned, the one that affirms that there is no religion without sacrifice, and no true religion without the true and only sacrifice, the sacrifice of the Son of God made man. Finally, the work of the Church

232 ‘ TtàUurd de Chardin. Zr Phàwmène humain, p. 209.

also k pCTt de Lubac. w Theologü of today and tomorrow, “A double task proposed by

t of Biarritz

tsi not distinguished from ia scientific research, nor the theological virtues “liesénergies human of love and study”.

It must be recognized that the Teilhardian doctrine has something attractive and perhaps even fascinating, insofar as it calls for an overcoming of the quarrels of parties that tear humanity apart (democracy, communism, fascism) in order to constitute “a general front of human progress. To unify the living human forces… the direct and effective method would be simply to beat the call and to form the block of all those who, either on the right or on the left, think that the great affair, for modern Humanity, is to make a way out by forcing some threshold of greater consciousness. Christians or non-Christians, men animated by this conviction form a homogeneous category… They can move forward hand in hand because their attitudes, far from being exclusive, virtually extend and only ask to complement each other. What are they waiting for to constitute the common front of all those who believe that the Universe is moving forward and that we are responsible for making it move forward?

Of course, this noble objective calls for a common thought, a dogma that serves as a common denominator, “the solid basis of a common creed between freethinkers and believers, Christian or non-Christian”, which consists in “believing that the universe is moving forward and that we are in charge of making it move forward” (p.42and43).

To this, the author gives a first answer. He appeals to an elementary truth that has been verified so often in history. Father Teilhard forgets in fact that there are two cities “one formed by those who confess Jesus Christ, who accept his word and his grace, the other formed by those who have accepted to do the works of the Prince of Darkness”.

Let’s try to understand how one can come to assert such things. It is the effect of a blindness. It is because he was “dazzled, fascinated and finally mystified by the hypothesis of evolution”, it is because he “regarded it as the supreme and supremely explanatory principle of the visible world

and invisible world”. Matter, humanity, temporal society, and the Church itself were all drawn into this irreversible progress.

We must recognize that this contradicts the thought of St. Paul and St. John who tell us that, through the Incarnation, we have arrived “at the end of time”, that the great goods brought by Jesus Christ are definitive and unsurpassable. Then it is necessary to see how “the myth of the universal Evolution” involves “the most gross confusions”:

The communist thrust is identified with a civilization worthy of man; Christians and freethinkers are declared to be a “homogeneous category”, if at all they are concerned about the future of the world; finally, scientific research is equated

with worship and even human love with holiness, progress in the temporal field with celestial beatitude”.

The example of human love directly affects married people. In the thesis of total evolution, “human love between man and woman will unerringly become a marvel of spirituality and purity” since each one surpasses himself and feels drawn further than himself. It is a question, then, as Father Calmel notes, of “a purification of the human heart without grace, by its own resources, on the condition that it burns with “the passion of the common destiny which always leads further”. All human love is sanctified by the sole fact that it is a motor of the evolution of humanity, that is to say, of a construction and a surpassing of oneself, of “spiritual fertilization”. In short, “Evolution, by its sacrosanct virtue and without any grace from above, is capable of elevating and purifying love and humanity.

Beyond the human love, the father Teilhard announces us a “new form of love for Omega, “the real pole of psychic convergence, which is a kind of “humanitarian and cosmic feeling”.

salt” (Teilhard de Chardin, O/., p. 83). ‘

consciousness of God in the heart of the noosphere… 1 apparition de la théosphcrc ” {Teilhard de Chardin, 240 - Itinéraires n‘62. avrÜ 1962. p. 189.

But that is not all. Father Teilhard is a Christian and he wants to harmonize cosmic, political and psychic evolution with the great truth of piracy, of Christ’s return in glory. For it is not enough to know where humanity is progressing: “We can

and we must believe it: we are moving forward… We are moving forward, of course, but in what direction?

To this the Jesuit replies: the summit of humanity's ascent, the point of convergence of the efforts of all men, whoever they may be, is Christ, the fusion of everything and everyone in Christ.

The least that an unbeliever must admit today, if he understands the biological situation of the world, is that the figure of Christ (such as it is not only described in a book, but concretely realized in the Christian conscience) is the most perfect approximation up to now of a final and total object on which the universal human effort can tend, without getting tired or deformed".

This is the noble term of the universal evolution that mobilizes all the

To this cosmic and human evolution, Calmel answers first of all with Saint Paul that, in Christ, God gives us all things (Rm 8,32). He finds it in

the confusion between reason and faith, in the illusory attempt to marry a false philosophy with the revealed fact, in an idea of scientist, in this hypothesis of the evolution (that besides he never critically examined) which imposed itself to him with tyrannical requirements (…). Willy-nilly, human and divine truths had to bend, to let themselves be twisted, triturated, kneaded, until finally appearing to us under unrecognizable features.

The reflections that the young Dominican had made to himself in 1942 were thus jimcs, Father Teilhard de Chardin realizes a real confusion between nature and grace that engenders the myth of evolution.

241 ■ Teilhard de Chardin, op. âl., p. 16.

m-W..p.22.

243 - In another article, Father Calmel responds to Teilhard’s revolutionismc with the dogma of original sin: “There is no variable dosage of this sin in the course of the centuries. This sin does not fail to be attenuated by the virtue of the evolution (nor of the rest no sin); it is all in every man, without increase nor decrease. “(Iteratians n. 78, December 1963, p. 185)

Father Roger-Thomas Calmel

In July 1962, in a “note on evangelical morality”, Father Calmel compared the propaganda which tends to build globalism with the theory of Teilhard de Chardin:

The most aberrant vices are presented to us as normal; we are assured that the most monstrous institutions of totalitarian statism are a progress of society. The press, propaganda, the police system, national education, and national embrigadement are organized a little more each day to force us to call good evil, light darkness.

This is certainly not a surprise. But how sad to see the men of the Church add their voices to this concert:

And a great “scientific-philosophico-religious” machine, set up from scratch by a cleric, the integral evolutionism of the Jesuit Father Teilhard de Chardin, is recommended to us at the right moment ‘^ to complete the dissolution of everything’”.

One cannot help but be struck by the relevance of such a study. Without knowing it, Father Calmel put his finger on

what would be the soul of the doctrinal drift of many Churchmen during and after Vatican Council 11.

In the meantime, another front was calling for the enlightenment of the son of Saint Dominic.

Reverse clericalism

The difficulties that the Catholic City encountered in its relations with the ecclesiastical hierarchy in France led Father Calmel to reflect on the role of the clergy and the faithful in political study and action

Already in 1962, the Catholic press and a good number of priests were won over by the new ideas, often with the blessing of the hierarchy. A newspaper sold at the door of churches could praise the benefits of communism, a Christian journalist had the audacity to praise Simone de Beauvoir without being worried in the least. On the other hand, when lay people, those of the Catholic City, organized study groups on the encyclicals of the popes, they were condemned by the same clerics.

245 . Ilw&Jm n’ 65. july.august 1962. p. 132. /Mayors i.” 63. May 1962, p. 3 to 25.

Why was this bias used? Was it because of an openly hostile attitude to the traditional teaching of the popes? This played an important role, of course, but another argument was put forward, a more specious one, which would soon wreak havoc, that of the ecclesiastical “mandate”. Father Calmel was especially indignant about this, about seeing bishops and priests use their supernatural authority to impose a thought contrary to Tradition on the one hand, and on the other, to break the impulse of simple faithful who are

trying to save, in their own domain, that of political life, the principles and morals of Christianity.

Once again, Father Calmel's work had a prophetic character. For soon, it was in the name of supernatural power that popes and bishops would impose on all the faithful a liturgy and a teaching that would violate the faith of their baptism. As early as 1962, the Brother Preacher spoke out, in a much more modest setting, against this abuse of power.

Certainly, clericalism has always existed and it threatens the clergy more or less at all times, but no more than the abuse of power by those who hold authority, such as the husband over his wife, and the wife over her children. It is the risk inherent in the providential existence of religious authority. What does it consist of?

Clericalism is the will to power with the particular form it takes in the cleric; with the new means it has at its disposal in the Christian who is a minister of grace and who has authority over consciences. Clericalism is human pride which uses the means reserved for the clerical state, which dresses itself in those masks which the clerical state obliges it to put on.

In its classic form, clericalism is the abuse of authority by the cleric "to defend an order of things which, at least in appearance, favors religion". In this case, the priest wants to do good, but he only uses the wrong means. The fact is very regrettable, certainly, but it is exceeded today by another form of clericalism, the "inverted clericalism", that which applies itself to destroy the Catholic order, which uses "religious intimidation, inathematism motivated as well as not, excommunication of more or less great scope", to make advance the spirit of the world of the Church.

Today, these exceptional measures affect the faithful who want to defend and spread the social doctrine of the Church, “following a safe, practical, open method of study and dissemination”. And they do so with

priests who give them the theological information they need, who are the guarantors of the Catholic orthodoxy of their work, who teach them the laws of the interior and liturgical life. Was it necessary to give these eedesiastics a greater place?

It is sometimes said that the acquisition of the social principles of Catholicism would be more serious if mandated clergymen were to attend the study circles, direct them and straighten them out.

Well, I don’t think that the presence of a chaplain, whatever the color of his robe, in a group of lay people, brings all security from the doctrinal and spiritual point of view. (…)

All the more so since in meetings that deal simply with natural law, and even then, with reference to the encyclicals, one does not see that their presence is really necessary. The layperson does not need to be chaperoned by the cleric in all his activities. You have told him so many times that he is an adult…

He will therefore know how to “deepen the doctrine of the Church on private property”, “study the encyclical of Pius XI” on education, “meditate on the speeches and messages of Pius XII on the iniquity of statism and its harmfulness”, “search in the encyclicals for a clear notion of that extra-

ordinarily extensive, incredibly concealed sect”, Freemasonry

In a previous article, Father Calmel had already touched on this delicate subject. After having clarified the nature of the kingdom of Christ, at the same time, but analogously, interior, ecclesial and political, he concluded;

While Christ’s kingship in the religious realm, in the order of conversion and theological life, is realized primarily through the priesthood, since it is the priest who is the minister of grace and of the Gospel, Christ’s kingship over the things of this world is realized primarily through the laity. It is the proper mission of the laity to create and maintain temporal institutions in conformity with Christian justice.

No more than Christian civilization separates Church and State, the preaching and defense of the faith and the establishment or safeguarding of a Christian political order, a work which tends to restore the social reign of Jesus Christ

247 - Father Caimcl gives on page 24 cl 25, the few titles around which 1 teaching of

1961, article on the Chtist-Roi.

cannot separate the mission of the faithful from that of the authorized clerics^*. It is indeed this unity that Father Calmel seeks. His study on “inverted clericalism” ends with these words: “If we have exposed our reflections, it is to

help, according to our measure, to this beautiful and powerful harmony^*. “

Algeria

The disastrous consequences of the Evian Accords between the government and the F.L.N., on March 18, 1962, followed by the independence of Algeria on July 3, 1962, could not fail to affect the son of France that was Father Calmel. The lamentable situation of the million Frenchmen suddenly expatriated, the assassination of many Moslems hunted down by the F.L.N.”’, the innocent prisoners and their families, the scourges which would not fail to fall on France following such misdeeds, affected the Dominican’s heart. This sorrow was accentuated by the attitude of many ecclesiastics. The silence of some, the approvals of others showed the weakness of the Church in those years. Pope John XXIII himself had seen fit to congratulate Ben Bella and to officially offer him, in January 1963, books for his library in Algiers, and this without having a single word for his victims “h On the spot, the Catholic population felt abandoned by the clergy. So much so that, in April 1962, a parish priest in Constantine, Algeria, was able to make the following speech to his bishop during his visit to his parish for the administration of confirmation:

Some, in their despair, come to murmur: “The government delivers the bodies and the Church delivers the souls” (…) The injustice and the

(i) ■ Lt iujel esc taken up again in the number 67 of November 1962. under the title “The clerics and the Christian civiiiuiion”. The author shows the importance that priests should give, in their place I pmenrs and theologians, to the political thing. The author strongly recommends the reading of the ihtnome Cacta, Le Cardinal Pie. N.E.L.. Paris

1959, as well as his study “d’Écritutc sainte sut le àjne social de Jésus-Christ” in the review Sanctifier in l’abbaye Saint-André, Bruges, April 1962. liO - Bien persuade que cette collaboration paisible et ordonnée ne pourrait avoir lieu que dans la

pcitcciion, for Jesus and for all the souls who support him. a true priest and a true son of Saint Fcminic” (letter of March II, 1962).

and 7,678 injured, mostly French of Algerian origin (in Monde et Vie, November 13

1997,p. 5).

2j2 ■ In his private correspondence, Father Calmel used very violent terms at this time to designate the government responsible for such misfortunes. “It is a plague worse than AttUa,” writes

The contempt of a government is painful, but it can be borne; the lies and hatred of journalists in search of copy can be borne; but the silence of the Church… of this Church which is the last refuge of truth and love, it would be a scandal, because the flock would be without a shepherd.

In France, the press praised the Muslim fundamentalists and kept quiet about their cruelties, while a good part of the clergy was pleased with the course of events.

In such circumstances, Father Calmel had at heart, above all, to support the victims of these injustices. During the Lenten sermon he preached in the city of Foix (Ariège) in 1963,

which bore many fruits of conversion, he was able to confide: “I will have reached especially the pieds-noirs; there are some in this region who were welcomed by incomprehension and indifference. The meeting of a brother preacher who understood their drama gave them courage” Mr. R. D., who suffered in General de Gaulle’s prisons from 1962 to 1965, testifies to the benefit that Father Calmel’s articles in Itinerary did for him and for some of his fellow prisoners: “It was for us a very vitaminized food, and we were struck by the clarity of his expositions, his lucidity and his prophetic sense.

Moreover, while thinking of souls, he did not neglect any effort to relieve the bodies. This is how, for example, he raised benefactors for the Association des Anciens des Affaires Algériennes of General Parlange, or for individuals, such as a lady, for example, whose husband had been assassinated in Algiers in 1962.

The lessons of history

Moreover, the Algerian drama and the accelerated decadence of the countries of ancient Christianity forced reflection. As usual, Father Calmel, a theologian, wanted to shed light on events in the light of supernatural faith and to draw the consequences for the practical life of each one.

254 - Itinéraires No. 65, July-August 1962.

ncs political detainees,” confided Father Calmel. rcconforrcs by these detained brothers and that mcncourages me. Among all these dctcniis

of Biarritz

In June 1962, he published an article which contrasts with the previous ones by its brevity and by its particularly solemn style", like a manifesto or a testament. Against those who preach blind abandonment to the intoritcs, he shows the duty of insurrection:

All the conduct (of Saint Joan of Arc) shows that she thought: Certainly, it is God who allows it; but what God wants, at least as long as I have an army left, is that I make good war and Christian justice. Then she was burned. (…)

Relying on God's grace is not to do nothing. It is to do, while remaining in love, all that is in our power. (…)

Whoever has not meditated on the just uprisings of history, on the war of the Mashabees, on the ride of Joan of Arc, on the expedition of Don Juan of Austria, on the revolt of Budapest, whoever has not entered into sympathy with the noble insurgents of history - whatever the profiteers and provocateurs may be - I refuse him the right to speak to me about Christian abandonment. (…)

He who understands that there is no fidelity to God unless it is to oppose an inflexible refusal to the Antiochus or the Bedfords, to the Selims and the Khrushchevs, who understands in truth that fidelity to the Lord, to his law, to his Church, to the natural social order, demands absolutely certain refusals, he, he alone, is able to speak of surrender to the divine will. (…)

I say well that the abandonment is situated in the heart of the action and of the enterprise; even when the abandonment makes consent to the death Ieanne on the stake of Rouen and saint Louis on the bed He r.

t, as

11 was difficult, when reading such a manifesto, not to think of the French officers of the O-A-S., and of Colonel Bastien-Thiry who would attempt, on August 22, 1962, to ambush General de Gaulle at Petit-Clamart in order to have him judged by a constitutional tribunal. But it also announced the conciliar turmoil and the liturgical revolution, still unforeseeable in June 1962, which were going to put the clerics and many of the faithful in a position to launch a crusade for doctrinal and liturgical Tradition.

Some of Father Calmel’s friends were concerned to see him take such strong public positions. Didn’t he risk a reprimand from his superiors or the political authorities? He reassured a correspondent with the words

Do not tremble for me. As Boutang says: “If I reached two hundred thousand readers, I would be in jail. For forty thousand, no one cares. “All the more reason for a convent chapel in a hotel town

However, in order to adopt the right Christian attitude in the revolutionary upheavals, it is necessary to grasp their profound nature. In December of the same year, Father Calmel proposed to the readers of Itinéraires a note on the progress of history in which he highlighted the perversity of communism and its religious dimension:

The novelty of communism, its progress in evil, is to have made an idol of the collective and of its historical becoming, activated by the revolutionary dialectic. The man is immolated to this historical becoming of the collective, it is in relation to that that he is judged. The truth becomes “the sense of the History”. As perversion of the city of Caesar, as

enslavement of the man, it is difficult to do better: (although it is perhaps not impossible; but then it would be the end of the world). (...)

Here we have fallen into a sacrilegious falsification of the general state of mind; in fact what has become god is not only money, pleasures, power, all the ancient idols. These idols remain, but they are now enslaved to a new idol: the historical becoming of the collectivity, “the sense of History” manipulated by the revolutionary dialectic; “the sense of History” is the new idol, the most lying, the most empty, the most inhuman.

Once again, Father Calmel’s reflections had a prophetic character. A few months later, on April 11, 1963, Pope John XXlll published the encyclical Patent in terris, in which he consecrated the “meaning of history” under the title of “signs of the times” and proposed the Church’s services to world government. Calmel’s readers were warned against these innovations and were able to measure their impact.

In February 1963, for the first time, the preaching brother took on a somewhat apocalyptic tone, recalling with gravity, with reference to the Apocalypse, that until the end of time, “Christ will strike men with just punishments. And so, “in this perspective, it is not unreasonable to think that our era will not escape the plagues it deserves. The perspective he presented to his readers was not a happy one;

The hour will sound of divine chastisement on the nations still free. Legoism, cowardice, the hardening of souls, their habit of languishing at ease and at rest in mortal sins of all kinds, in a word, the degradation of private and public

morals will have become so abject in the eyes of men and so offensive to God, Christian heroism will be so rarefied that the weak bulwark of the few honest institutions that still exist will no longer be able to hold out; there will be collapse, chaos, and perhaps unimaginable horrors.

We will collapse before we can pull ourselves together, just as some lazy revelers succumb to an attack, and within half a day get so well into vile ooze and general liquefaction that they must urgently be locked up in special coffins.

The style is that of a Saint Vincent Ferrier or a Savonarola! However, Father Calmel kept a calm confidence:

If I preach the gospel of conversion as “the day of the Lord and the great tribulation” approaches, I am convinced of three things: first, there will be souls who have been waiting who will consent to

ran’ 70, February 1963.

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Then, because we will be willing to accept the plagues with a contrite and humbled heart, they will turn to our sanctification and, as theologians say, the punishment will become medicinal; finally, seeing our good will, the Lord will shorten the time of tribulation, will muzzle the satanic Beast sooner, will allow a new Christianity to flourish on the French earth.

The future will tell whether this persuasion of a Christian restoration was prophetic or not, but for the present the preacher brother called for a crusade. For he is “quite sure that we have something else to do than to sink into a morose rumination and spend our time chewing on poison”. But this work of reconstruction requires workers of great quality, beginning with priests:

In order that institutions of Christianity may be rebuilt in truth (…), the action and assistance of evangelical priests, of priests who tend to live on the level of the holy Church, is absolutely indispensable.

Then, it is urgent to return to principles, to restore realistic philosophy and theology: “No renewal of Christianity, indeed, without a doctrinal and Thomistic renewal. “Then, whatever the progress of the Beast, “each one in our position and according to the particular laws of our mission, soldier or schoolmaster, farmer or magistrate or small employee in a Babylonian company, or priest of the Lord, (…) we will try to promote the Christian renewal of France and a civilization not too unworthy of Christ the King. “

Father Calmel’s correspondence allows us to take a look at the intentions and the state of mind that inhabited him when he published these very serious words. In this tragic hour for the Church and for the world, it was difficult to find the right note, to marry strength and peace, legitimate indignation and confidence in God. In spite of all his efforts to do so, he was not always satisfied with himself. He would have liked to do better, to be more accurate, and above all to correspond to grace. But on Christmas Day 1962, the religious received a special grace of serenity. This made him see things in a higher light. On February 7, 1963, he wrote: “My article (published in February 1963) is profoundly tragic. It is dated October 28. I would like you to know that now I would write it with the same gravity, but in a more peaceful tone. May Our Lady keep for me this grace of Christmas 1962 - this reconciliation (how can I put it?) not

(it is unthinkable) with the aberrations of this time, but with the life that the Lord asks me (asks us) to live in this time “

11 took up his reflections on the Apocalypse in the May 1963 issue. With Il Tradition, he clearly teaches, on the one hand, that since the redemptive Incarnation, “the times are fulfilled” and, on the other hand, that God delays the end of the world in order to complete the number of the elect. With the Apocalypse (ch. 13), he points out the two main weapons of the devil that he had pointed out in May 1960: the distorted political powers, symbolized in the Apocalypse by the Beast (which rises from the sea) and, together with it, the false philosophy, represented by the Beast that rises

from the earth. Communism, in our time, unites the two scourges, “combining in its essence the most idolatrous mysticism, the most completely inverted, and the most perverse political organization.” Moreover, the Dominican’s political vision was not a luxury of an intellectual, but became a deep concern in his heart as a priest of Jesus Christ. While he was preparing his Lenten preaching in Foix, in 1963, he wrote these lines;

The difficulty of being heard by them (the people of Foix) comes from this: the parish priest baptizes them, the bishops confirm them and then abandon them, making fun with the last cynicism of knowing if the social and political life does not almost inevitably force them to live as if they were neither baptized nor confirmed. “Yes, my brothers, social and political life continually scandalizes you; it is, in France today, scandalous in itself. (…)

I want to preach to them as to brothers who are threatened by totalitarianism, but who will succeed in resisting, in spite of the betrayal of the bishops, thanks to personal prayer; I want to teach them personal prayer, I want to preach to them as to brothers threatened by the materialism that Bastien-Thiry denounces. I want to preach to them as to brothers who no longer know that they have a homeland and that there are saints who protect the homeland. I want to preach to them as to brothers who risk getting bogged down and hardened in mediocre, but sticky sins. (…) To escape from materialism, from hardening in

Jcl’iniéritur.àfabriqucruncÉ^iscvidcduChrist” (p. 1.15).

sin, to selfish indifference, to enlighten them on prayer in spirit and in truth, on the frequentation of the sacraments in spirit and in truth. (...)

The cross, a scandal for the Jews and folly for the Gentiles, but salvation for believers because of Jesus Christ. How the cross presents itself in their lives: physical suffering; injustice suffered at the hands of leaders; betrayal by leaders; betrayal by friends; betrayal in the family; excessive poverty. But also difficulty in resisting the materialistic atmosphere, contempt that must be accepted for the sake of God. All these crosses save us, united to those of Christ, because they manifest love and purify it.

Unfortunately, I realize that too often priests and bishops speak to the Christian people as if they were sinless, as if they had no homeland, as if they were not threatened, and everywhere gripped by a materialistic atmosphere, as if the fact of being baptized, confirmed, and practicing on Sundays, dispensed natural virtues. (...) Nowadays, many priests speak and act with their faithful as if they were a sentimental and idealistic flock, called to favor the development of underdeveloped countries. They do not see Christians as they are; they do not see the perils that threaten them; they are seen and treated as humanitarian Yankees who will ensure the “development” of the planet. I will speak to them as to sinful and redeemed brothers.

The social and political life in France was governed by a totalitarian ideology, it was a kind of steamroller of souls. It was urgent to denounce it and to exhort the faithful to defend their spiritual life, the natural virtues and their country.

The pure means

If the duty of resistance is obvious, the duty of action is less so. The temptation is strong, in times of cataclysm, to panic, to lose patience, to hope for an immediate solution to the evils that afflict us. We then take weapons that we believe to be effective, we imitate our enemy and we aggravate the evil.

This is why Father Calmel thought it good, at that time, to return unceasingly to the notion of “pure means” which he had already deepened, in the 1950s, with the Dominican teaching sisters of the Holy Name of Jesus.

The upheaval into which a great number of churchmen wanted to drag souls certainly did not justify every blow. One fact is very clear

The convent of Biarrit.

He was writing to a woman who was a member of the congregation, and he was writing to her in a friendly tone of voice. He wrote to a correspondent:

The review made the indiscretion to publish, without asking me anything, the two letters of a “religious”. Fortunately, they did not put Dominican, and the evils that I denounce are not, alas, particular to the Dominicans. The fact remains that, if I had been consulted, I would never have published this, at least in this form. Would you like to join me in praying for these two intentions (even three)?

- May this publication made without me not get me into trouble (I hope not).

- That I am more suspicious when I send letters to certain people.

- And above all that I live the pain caused by the decadence and even the betrayal of so many clerics close enough to the heart of Jesus and the heart of Our Lady to keep the peace and to intervene only with the divine wisdom inspired by the Spirit of Jesus himself. I am far from it. May this be granted to me

It is at this level that Father Calmel wanted to situate himself and to establish the souls who entrusted themselves to him. In his correspondence, first of all, he constantly returned to the necessity of peace and the supernatural spirit. It is in the heart of Christ that we must live the iniquities of our time, it is from there that we must consider the upheavals:

About the defrocking, about the wind of apostasy that is blowing, (…) remain in peace; because what Jesus wants from us in this tornado is peace, confident prayer, relaxation in daily sacrifice, wisdom to keep our lives balanced. Worry is not his will. When more painful hours come, we will have grace; but it would not be good to torment ourselves in advance. For me, as I see the situation getting worse every year, I continue my ministry as a “doctor and evangelist” in great peace, Jesus is there.

I would like you… in spite of the evil that we have in front of so many iniquities and sufferings, to remain peaceful, strong, sure of the Lord, confident… For me, it seems that since Christmas I have lived closer to

!6i - 11 pirliit there of personal cxpericncc. He could testify on January 24, 1963; “I see as much (made niguirc the horrors of the regrnre and the inconsrstanee or the betrayal of the men of Church, but it seems to me that)e pne with more peace. Whatever happens, the Lord is with us. “

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In addition, his oral preaching (in the parishes, in the houses, in the more informed circles on the occasion of pilgrimages) often gave him the opportunity to return to this principle. During the first international congress of the \Office in Sion, on May 2, 1964, he was invited to preach in the Church of the Sacred Heart. To this chosen audience, he would endeavor to show “that it is Mary who gives us the ability to be realistic in our struggle against the world”. True to his original intuition of “mystical realism,” he did encourage the congressmen to work for the restoration of Christianity, but to work driven by the desire for holinessâ€™:

Thus holiness is imposed. However, holiness does not dispense from anything, but it animates, raises and purifies everything; both the study of sacred doctrine and the communication of this doctrine; both the practice of family virtues and civic virtues.

In the face of the countless sins of our time, only holiness, only works “animated by the search for spiritual perfection in Jesus Christ”, will have a chance of success. It is true that error and evil must be seen and fought, “but it is also necessary to judge, reprove and fight with a certain heart, with a heart given to God”. It is by looking at the life and fruitfulness of the Blessed Virgin Mary that we understand these things. It is to her that the preacher directs his listeners, “May Our Lady intervene in this area of h practical life and obtain for us a great realism. “

Our Mother has reminded us of the gravity of the moment in history that is ours; she has intervened expressly for this reason… It is not enough to attack the evil of the world, we must do it with a pure heart.

The first reaction to the earthquake that shook France and the Church must therefore be the sincere desire for holiness that animates all

b works. The second is that of prayer^”’. In a beautiful article published in the French Nation for Christmas 1962, Father Calmel called the clergy to prayer:

To the little Child presented to us by Mary the Virgin Mother, what can we say?

<what to ask on this Christmas of 1962? The eldest daughter of the Church has abandoned (hopefully for a time) the land of Algeria; our prisons are filled with good Frenchmen; the Communist antichrist tightens the noose of his presence and maneuvers his “transmission belts” with diabolical dissimulation. In this situation (and indeed on every occasion), may Our Lady inspire our prayer to her Son, and may she present to him what we desire with all our strength without knowing how to ask for it properly: forgiveness for us; forgiveness for our country; the conversion of our country; the freedom of the prisoners; the conversion of the Christian world; the lowering and defeat of Satan’s minions; the evangelization of the human race. And may our prayer rise in faith.

The religious keeps an inviolable hope in the efficacy of truth and grace, in the virtue of Christ’s sacrifice, in the actuality of Tradition; until the last day the Mass will be celebrated which presents to the Father the perfect sacrifice, treasure of all grace, reparation for every offense,

consolation for every distress. The Gospel, the Mass - the Word of life, the holy sacrifice - these two realities will not pass away, because the Word became flesh and dwelt among us forever. (...) It is forever the time of the Gospel^L

Consequently, at the same time as he prays, the Christian must witness to It truth, the priest must preach. For Father Calmel, this meant intensifying his ordinary ministry, continuing his Lenten preaching, and warning souls of good will by word and deed"■*. This duty of spreading

in ■ Ct fiisam, k father Calmel was not only following the voice of his theological science and his piopu lit spititual, but he was faithful to the education he had received in Gagnol and to the atmosphere

P Jt people at the mass, if it were not for the foreigners. Yet Sauveterre has a good heart. God can clunge everything, but we must pray, love each other, work. Perhaps that will change. "

2"2 -Pire Calmel, "The time of the Gospel December 1962.

173 - Lent in Pamiers (Ariègc) in 1962, in Fois (Atiège) in 1963. in Biarritz (PyrcnccsAinnquclcn 1964.

174. Following the meetings in Paris in January 1963. he writes: "I realized much more that my colliboration in Itinerari was allowing souls to breathe. "(Letter of January 7, 1963) Likewise.

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The need to find the truth was all the more urgent since it was precisely because of having renounced preaching that such a situation had arisen. The present evil, that of Algeria and France, as well as that of the Church, came from a resignation of the authorities, from a loss of the meaning of faith, from a lack of confidence in the efficacy of the truth.

In the above-mentioned conference to the Benedictine monks of Fontgombault in July 1963, he drew up a picture of his Order and explained the meaning of his present mission:

The Dominicans who chose the side of the “revolution” in the years 25-30 (Intellectual Life) have a remarkable temporal flair, but only in the immediate. For in the immediate, the revolution triumphed. But it triumphed in a world that was dying and that it was making die. In the end, the Dominicans who chose to triumph on the side of men will lose even on the side of men, because on the side of God they have already lost, because of their infidelity. They have won only in appearance. (…) The unnatural world is doomed sooner or later to ruin.

In the meantime, I am trying to prepare for the coming of the Lord in this decaying world by contradicting this world and proclaiming the truth that delivers.

What should be preached to souls who are troubled or carried away by the revolutionary whirlwind? To speak to them about God, to bring them back to the stillness of God and to the immutable principles of the spiritual life.

The primacy of contemplation

It is striking to see that, the harder the fight became, the more Father Calmel felt the need to look up to God, to unite himself to him through prayer and to lead the faithful who called upon him.

His work on Christian literature, first of all, was along these lines. He explained himself:

I am currently working on an article on Ronsard and Péguy. The purpose of these articles is to bring the readers to bring their inner song before God, to

After his visit to the Congress of Sion, in May 1964, he wrote: “Since the Congress, I feel more that souls are interested in my prose and I have more enthusiasm for writing. {Letter of May 16, 1964)

275 - A few years later, Father Calmel affirmed in a private interview: “One of the most horrible defects of the five republics, of the July monarchy and of the Empire was to have prevented

(Interview of January 1971)

t of Biarritz

to converse about everything inwardly in the peace of God, to reconcile with Jesus and his Mother their inner speech^*.

But, more explicitly, while the Council sought to adapt itself to the world, the son of St. Dominic preached the necessary

mystical life. Opposing the activist tendency nourished by the movements of Catholic Action and nourished by the philosophy of Tcilhard de Chardin, he applied himself to show “that the life of grace, in tending to perfect charity, also leads SC, in the same movement, to mystical contemplation, the contemplation of the saints”. For the Holy Spirit “cannot take hold of the soul of a tender contemplative even if that soul is occupied with external action”. In short, “the contempt for contemplation is the sign of a contempt for charity”.

However, even at these heights, Father Calmel kept his feet on the ground. For an authentic spiritual life is by no means an escape from the duty of the present moment”, nor even a pretext for surrendering the things of the earth to the purely pagan laws of efficiency. In the name of his realism, he insists that, in order to carry this mystical life and thus maintain the primacy of contemplation, the active life must follow very precise laws, be measured by the virtue of prudence, poverty, the choice of pure means. The concrete life must stand up against modern mores which make any contemplative life impossible.

These new ways of living, the disciple of Saint Thomas makes them derive from the loss of the metaphysical spirit, and makes them lead to the systematic dumbing down of the modern school and television. This glance of wisdom is of a surprising topicality;

After having turned away the spirit of the divine Revelation as unworthy of its application, we have progressively lost the sense of being; pushed away the science of Being: the metaphysics, exalted the science of phenomena. Metaphysics, after an awful criticalist and anti-intellectualist intoxication, has been reduced, with Sartre and his

epigones, to become a sophisticated chatter, hollow and full of garbage. This loss

276 ■ Letter of January 23, 1963.

278 - See numerous quotations from Tcilhard de Chardin, p. 177, note 2.

279 - In a later article, Father Calmel tells of the feit followed by the ancestor: “In the years 1921-1930, when the Christian people’s rediscovery of their vocation was coupled with a suspicious infatuation for mysticism, a Carmelite woman, admirable for her good sense and for her ability, said, not without accuracy, ‘If this continues, mysticism will kill religion. “(Itineraries No. 90, ftvricr 1965)

In 1963, he expressed his great desire to work for the Holy Church and concluded: “I would like to do all this: but I am so limited and alone,” deprived of direct contact with his dear Dominican Sisters of the Holy of Jesus, he had to be satisfied with a few episodic news items. However, they were very happy to encourage him;

Calmel to the Dominican Sisters and to their founder, whom he visited as much as his own ministry. It was he, for example, who assured the study session in Pontca on August 7, 1962, then those from August 16 to September 4, 1963“‘and d 64. It was during his stay in the summer of 1963 that he met for the first time with Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre who came to visit Fr.

1 Madian, m Father Calmel, Brii’capology, Postûicc. Difralivre. 191

Iire Calmel then composed, for the use of the sisters, a “Little lexicon”, which can be found in part in Iiinéraires n* 79, January 1

The monks of FontgombanIt also gave the Dominican a very special welcome. The latter had met the Abbot, Dom Rom, on July 2, 1961, and had promised to visit the famous monastery which served as a rallying point for priests and faithful who wanted to fight against the revolution in the world and in the Church.

On July 11, 1963, Father Calmel was finally able to realize his project and take a charitable break in this land of prayer. The abbot ended up making a

He began by thanking his hosts and then expressed his admiration for monastic life. He began, of course, by thanking his hosts and then expressed his admiration for monastic life:

Their hospitality touches me, from the first day you feel that it is a tradition and that the tradition is alive.

This life edifies me; I believe it is austere but very sanctifying, very suitable for sanctification. Why? Because the monk is extremely carried: obedience, chanting, continuous sung prayers, rhythm of life and movements, an abbot who does not change. The main thing is that he lets himself be carried along.

As one might expect, he could not help but compare this cloistered life to the apostolic life:

This life is not apostolic except for the radiation (and that is a lot). When one is in charge of a third party, one cannot be so carried away. There is a risk of coming less close to God; but this risk can be avoided if the “Quid fiunt peccatores? “

It is to the extent that he is seized with compassion for souls and lives according to the beatitude of mercy that the Dominican can join religious life and preaching while remaining a true contemplative.

The various stays of Father Calmel at Fontgombault were certainly a profound consolation to him. What a disappointment, however, when he returned in 1971 and heard the abbot praise the new lectionnairt, the use of the familiar in prayer, the readings in French. Dom Roy even advised him: “Accept all possible openings, since you are firm. “As if our reaction to new things was only a personal and subjective matter.

The tireless preacher found another place of rest and cessation, in October i 962, “in Bigorre, not far from Lourdes, with the Benedictines

t of Biarritz

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The convent

dt Tournay “. It was there that he met a young monk, Dom Gérard Cilvct, with whom he developed a deep friendship. He took advantage of this stay to ptfchcraux neighboring nuns on the Christ-Roi’*’.

Dom Gérard Calvet was born in Bordeaux on November 18, 1927. After his schooling at Maslacq and his military service in the Spahis in Morocco, he entered the Benedictine abbey of Madiran. In 1952, the community was transferred to Tournay. In 1963, Dom Gérard was sent to Brazil from where he did not return until 1968. Not finding himself in the novelties that were disfiguring monastic life, the monk obtained permission to leave his monastery for some time.

He was welcomed at Fontgombault Abbey for six months. 11 tried out the Cartusian life at the Charterhouse of Montrieux (Var) where he stayed for only three months. In the spring of 1969, he moved to the hermitages of Montmorin in the Alps with Father Emmanuel de Floris, a monk from En-Calcat, before founding the small monastery of Bédoin (Vaucluse) in August 1970. The monastery was transferred to Le Barroux at Christmas 1981. In 1988, Dom Gérard and his community separated from Archbishop Lefebvre, whom he had known and followed since 1974, in order to rally to the Roman directives concerning the Council and the new Mass.

Before the departure of the Benedictine monk to Brazil, Father Calmel went to Tournay twice (August 6 and September 19, 1963). He was able to meet and encourage "this very dear brother Dom Gérard". Thanks to the young Benedictine, he was able to have news of the political prisoners who were dear to him; he had news (and good, very good news) of the prisoners whom Dom Gérard visited in Fresnes - where a certain number are really sanctifying themselves - (and also details on the very holy death of Bastien-Thiry). One of Dom Gérard's brothers (a wine merchant from Bordeaux) takes care of harkis with officers: in a France that is becoming a swamp, there are still some very healthy islands full of life. In July 1963, Father Calmel went for the first time to Clouange, near Metz, to meet some souls who were calling on his ministry. They were soon to form a small "St. John's community" which brought together a small number of people who wished to maintain their fervor and to encourage each other in resisting the assaults of the world.

-Letter dated September 19, 1963.

Father Roger-Thomas Calmel

The spiritual father that Father Calmel was attached great importance to this supernatural communication, and he himself drew light and strength from it. He wrote on this subject:

What can be said of these unions of souls, except that the Virgin formed them, preserves them in her Immaculate Heart, makes them contribute to the peace, the generosity, the valour of those who thus love each other in the Lord™,

It is in Heaven that he sees the completed model of the supernatural friendship that unites certain souls in faith here below:

You know, Heaven can be described as follows: beings completely purified, all gathered in the love and joy of God seen face to face, in Jesus Christ, and the conversation that will be between us will always be at the level of God and will never draw us away from God in Jesus Christ, and there will be nothing but good and holy in each of the chosen ones”.

In a somewhat similar way, the collaborators of the review Itinéraim formed more and more a team, certainly very disparate but united by a real friendship. In the course of his travels, Father Calmel never lost an opportunity to meet this or that person (Madiran and Jean Ousset in January 1963, Henri Charlier in July of the same year). The spirit that united these militants of the truth appears in this brief account:

I have just celebrated mass at the church of Saint-Cloud, for the parish, with Madiran and Ousset. It is still a great joy to be united for the holy sacrifice when we are already united by a great friendship™. This brotherhood of soul consoled him greatly in the ordeal that struck him. However, it was in

Gagnol, above all, that Father Calmel could best rest his body, his heart and his mind. His presence in Biarritz and his

289 ■ As a good son of the farm, Father Calmel knew how to find his joy in simple things. On a trip back from Metz, he rejoiced in the gaiety of the Spanish workers: “My trip was marvelous (and sleepy) with the crowd of Spaniards returning from weeding beets (on the side of

Laon and Saint-Quentin). They fell d< even regaled with their songs to vocalize and in bai gladness in this people and what simplicity and ICS to prayer, at least in the cnscm

nt of the hands. Us occupied three wagons… What a c.” (Letter of M June 1964)^ ^

July 7, 1963.

January 4, 1963. Father Calmel leaves alo

ministry in the region (Lourdes, Toulouse, Agen) made it easier for him to reach out to the places where he had been born and raised. What a joy, then, in these reunions! He lived in the old pigeon house, where the grain was piled up, and which was then in such a state that one could put one’s foot through the floor. In his spare time, he found tepos by walking around the property and the surrounding area.

His sister Georgette and his nephew remembered his nosebleeds, very impressive, due to his great fatigue and his bad health. But above all, his love of speed remained legendary: “When the first cars were introduced, Roger wanted us to go faster and faster. He would say to me:

‘Faster! I pray, you drive!” He was a speed freak; it was never fast enough. “We were going down into the valley on a bad road. As soon as we acquired a solex” at the farm, Father Calmel used it to go to the village of Sauveterre-La-Lémance. “We were afraid, because it was so fast! “Decidedly, the grace of the priesthood does not destroy nature. And if it corrects it, it does so slowly.

In Gagnol, the Calmel’s son tasted the deeply Christian atmosphere of the French countryside in the past, the beauty of nature and the simple joys, the patient support of the pains of poverty and work. M. Calmel’s letters from this period show from which source his son, a priest, used to quench his thirst during his visits. He talks about the beauty of the flowers, the lambs frolicking in the fields, the squirrels jumping from one pine to another. April 10, 1965. Matthieu Calmel is delighted with the beauty and wisdom of two migratory birds, their life, their reproduction, their nests, then he adds: “You see that we have curious things,” And after having described a third species, he finishes: “… very cheerful birds until August. They go away and they come back at sowing time. I file them well. Here we are in that beautiful week when Christ died for

In contact with this rough but healthy life, the preacher brother did not risk escaping into an artificial world. His heavy work, his high theological studies and his mystical elevation were regularly drunk from the sources of true life, both very human and prayerful. How he needed it to resist the turmoil and to guide the souls who entrusted themselves to him I

Father Calmcl was in the convent of Biarritz when the Second Vatican Council opened. The innovative current that had been at work since the beginning of the 1930s, and whose influence had been growing prodigiously since then, was going to take power in the highest instances of the Church and thus assume a devastating preponderance.

The press, of course, the information he could glean here and there, but above all the life of his Order aroused Father Calmel's interest in Roman events. Several Dominicans, precisely those who were most to be feared, were indeed closely involved in the progress of the Council.

Father Chenu was not among the theologians officially recommended for the selection of the commissions, but he went to the Eternal City where he exerted a powerful influence. He preached at the bishops' conferences, and was available to the Council fathers to write modi for the various plans. He collaborated especially in the outline "The Church in the Present Age" (Gaudium et Spes) where, we are told, "the best of his influence is to be found". This conciliar constitution takes up the main lines of Father Chenu's preaching since 1935.

Father Congar, for his part, was called in 1961 by Pope John XXIII to be part of the theological preparatory commission for the Council. He who had been condemned by Rome and put aside under the pontificate of Pope Pius XII was not only rehabilitated but also promoted to a role

294 - Mario von Galli and Bcrnhard Moosbru^cr, Le Concile et ses conséquences. Rencontre, Lausanne. 1966 (a French, 1%7).

of the first order. When he arrived in Rome, Father Congar did an enormous amount of work. He was seen everywhere, he multiplied conferences, gave advice to all the bishops and experts he met, and widely distributed his writings. His Diary of the Council is very enlightening on the methods used by the innovators and on the state of mind of the Dominican. At the end of the Council, at the end of the very last session, he could write: “Many bishops congratulate me, thank me. A Spanish bishop even said to him: “The bishops are the successors of the apostles, but Father Congar is the successor of all the doctors and prophets.

Alongside these two great pioneers, other Dominicans stood out for their work. Father Refoulé played a great role in the constitution of an ecumenical bible, already during the Council, with the Protestant Marc Boegner and other Protestants. The text was revised by the Orthodox.

Father Lebret, a sociologist, who had been struck by the same condemnation as Father Congar in 1954, worked at length with the Taizé brothers and the bishops, especially those of Latin America. They set themselves the task of changing mentalities and adapting the Church to the “present time.

The active participation of these Dominicans made most of their confreres proud, but it alarmed those who professed to defend the doctrine of all time, among whom Father Calmel was not the least. From the very beginning of the Council, he brought down false enthusiasms. A Dominican sister of the

Holy Name of Jesus tells how, at the beginning of the Council, the sisters used to go to the local television station to watch the broadcast of the great Roman ceremonies. “We couldn’t guess what was going to happen. “But when she told Father Calmel about her perhaps somewhat naive enthusiasm, he corrected her sharply.

However, Father Calmel remained reserved, avoiding as much as possible any prejudice. On the eve of the opening of the Council, he wrote to a correspondent, troubled by the euphoria of the press announcing great changes in the Church:

John XXIII will not teach heresy, be sure of that. Now, that he is softer than, for example, St. Pius X in combating error, that is

a sad evidence. Let us not be discouraged (…). It is possible that the Council will push the Pope with a sword in his back to bring him to energetic decisions. This was seen in the 17th century. It is also possible that the Council turns out to be a failure. This has also happened on other occasions. Whatever happens, let us live in the Heart of Jesus; let us beg him for his Church, for the Council; let us be given for his Church. Let us beware of all panic, of all unreal optimism and also of all discouraged attitudes

The first news from Rome received in France, however, was hardly reassuring. On December 17, Father Calmel could write: Iean XXIII (…) is the pope that the Lord has given us; he will not make heresy, it is impossible. But I do not expect much from his government…

As for the Council, either it will do nothing, or if it continues to advance along the path of foolishness, as it is already doing, the Lord will disperse it, so that it does no harm, or it will be converted in time…

In a Sursum corda, he added:

In any case, Jesus will never abandon his Church and souls of good will. And whatever the future holds, he will surround us with a strength and tenderness that we have no idea of.

11 felt that, in such a situation, it was necessary to return to the principles. That is why, at the beginning of 1963, he set to work. He began with a free translation of a Latin text written by a group of conciliar experts and addressed by them to the fathers of the Council: it was a warning, dated May 25, 1963, against the "new theology. However, before the definitive publication of the official texts (1965 and 1966), Father Calmel's remarks touched more on the general spirit of the declarations than on the substance of the doctrine taught.

2S| . Letter of October 10, 1962. In the same correspondence, Father Calmel advised to keep to

The Council is a huge undertaking to disarm the Christian people on the occasion of the Council" (letter of November 20, 1963).

299 - On the subject of Jean Madiran, Father Calmel made a remark: "In his review, on the subject of JcanrXXIIl, Madiran sometimes tries to attenuate his worries, but I know that in himself he is not at all reassured - except on a plane of eternity, and that is rescntiel" (letter of February 7, 1963).

Father Roger-Thomas Calmel

A soft language

Father Calmel's first criticism concerns the style of the new theology. Progressivism is indeed characterized by its confused and interminable language. But this way of expressing itself is in itself a doctrine, a stand against the truth, and a weapon of propaganda.

In an article published in the summer of 1963 he confessed:

I have always abhorred soft, slimy or elusive expressions, which can be drawn in all directions, to which anyone can make say what he wants; (…) and they are all the more abhorrent to me as they are covered with ecclesiastical authorities (…). So above all these expressions seem to me a direct insult to him who said: "I am the Truth… You are the light of the world… Let your word be

The author takes examples from modern ecclesiology. One bishop defines the Church as "the extension of Christ into the world and the consecration of humanity and all its works," or teaches that "the Church absorbs the fundamental instincts of humanity. He finds others in a Teilhardde Chardin Lexicon (Seuil), based on the theory of evolution; Supernatural: supercreation, by a gracious initiative of divine friendship, of a sap that must be constantly supplied by the natural effort of life, Church: christic phylum where the supernatural organism that is called the mystical body is built and developed.

Mystical body: spiritual, animated and moving organism, in which we are biologically united.

Cosmogenesis morality: morality underpinned by a fundamentally evolutionary vision of the universe, where the

initial basis of obligation is the fact of being born and developing according to a current

Christian sanctity: the Christian saint is the one who seeks to push matter above itself and realizes before our eyes the ideal of the good servant of evolution.

Above all, vague language avoids defining. For to define is to show the limits, to distinguish the true from the false. Nowadays, it is no longer a question of anathematizing, of warning against evil, of stigmatizing it. Like

was 1963.

This mentality arouses in Father Calmel a lively indignation: “In this generalized bias of never seeing enemies of the Church, of no longer pronouncing the words persecutions or martyrs, I see a desire to debase the human creature, a miserable refusal to deny him all greatness. They want to reduce us to nothing more than shapeless tadpoles or ectoplasms without heart or soul.

It is also a denial of man’s ability to deceive himself, to damn himself, to invent “intrinsically perverse organizations”.

Moreover, it is in the name of the Church, in the name of the love that inhabits the holy Spouse of Christ, that Father Calmel fights against “soft language”;

As the most holy spouse of Christ and the most faithful repository of the secrets of his love, the Church speaks a clear, definite language, free from ambiguity, a firm language. Her application, through the ages, to provide the

per on the identity of Christ her Bridegroom, just as she has infallible knowledge from within of all that he has entrusted

to her, so she cannot bear to use language that would deceive us as to the identity of Christ, that would leave us uncertain as to the mysteries he has revealed. The formal rigor of his dogmatic definitions, the acute precision of his theological reflection, the limpidity of his preaching are nothing other than the proper language of his love. We shall understand him to the extent that we are his children, - then we shall abhor the soft, elusive and deceptive expressions”” - those expressions which flee from the truth, which tend to “naturalize” the supernatural, to reduce to a level of natural evolution the mysteries of the Incarnation, of the redeeming Cross and of the kingdom of God.

In a letter to Abbé Dulac, he wrote: “For every one of these soft and ployabic texts div<

Once again, the lucidity of Father Calmel is remarkable. At the very moracni where the documents of Vatican II were being elaborated, he gave his lecreuts the love of a true, strong and luminous language. Even before considering the content of the novelties taught by the fathers of the Council, he criticized their “imprecise, talkative and even elusive” writing. After 1965, he would describe the texts in a very graphic way:

Decrees follow constitutions and messages follow declarations without giving the mind, with rare exception, a sufficient grip. On the whole, you feel as if you were crushed under piles of quilts. But you don’t refute quilts. And if one wants to suffocate you under their heap, you pull your knife, give a few good blows lengthwise and crosswise and make

the feathers fly in the wind. In this case, the knife represents the definitions of the pre-Vatican II Councilsâ€™.

XJn evolutionary council

A direct effect of this imprecision of language is its evolutionary character””. In November 1964, Father Calmel proposed to his readers a precious “Summary of a Christianity without faith” which shows his deep understanding of the new theology which was triumphing at that time read Vatican *. On some burning issues he presents the traditional doctrine and then the progressive response. The latter is taken in large part from the works of Teilhard de Chardin. Once again, the reader can see the harmony between the theories of the Jesuit evolutionist and the spirit that inspires a great number of contemporary preaching and publications. Let us note, for example, the summary that the Dominican gives of progressive ecclesiology:

Calmel, at St. Pre. k-3 May 1985.

304. Pope Paul VI himself has more than once proclaimed the novelty of the Council’s thinking:

was given to us as an order, as a program. “(Osservatore Romano, July 3, 1974, quoted in Romano Amerio, Iota unum, p. 100)

305 - Itinéraires n” 87. November 1964. p. 330-342

306 - At what point in history are we? What do you think of Christ? Is there a natural constitution of society? Should we conceive of Ëglisc as a society endowed with CI prerogatives of power? What do you mean by sin? What do you say about St. Paul? What is the condition for a useful dialogue with the

unbeliever? Is there any compatibility between the Christian religion and the unbeliever?

The Church may maintain confessional structures for the time being, but in her most intimate reality she transcends all that is confessional, she establishes herself beyond all symbols and dogmas. The powers of the Church are all summed up in the mysterious property of activating human energy through a continuous witness of love and freedom.

Moreover, Father Calmel is not satisfied with a purely logical refutation of the new, he wants to penetrate the causes, to show the deep root of it. Now, beyond a resignation of intelligence, progressivism is a fault against charity. It does not believe in love, that God is Love and that He loves and creates men as they are. Because progressivism does not like the things that God makes and as he makes them, he throws himself in the novelty for the novelty;

Progressivism lacks heart. From the day it would be generous enough to accept the love of God in truth, it would plant its dreams and its attempts at transmutation of man, society and religion; it would stop poisoning souls with its dark theories, it would no longer be progressivism.

A pastoral council

Another characteristic of the Second Vatican Council attracted the attention of informed theologians. It was and wanted to be only a pastoral council. This brand new expression hid a strangeness. To warn the readers of Itineraries, Father Calmel offered them some “simple remarks on pastoral ministry”. These do not explicitly

mention the Council, nor do they pretend to explain the meaning of a “pastoral council”, but they set out in a positive way what is expected of a true pastor.

First of all, it must be held that all authentic pastoral care necessarily includes the condemnation of errors;

In our sinful world, the proclamation of the truth revealed by God is inseparable from the condemnation of the errors forged by Satan. There are many cases where evangelization cannot do without condemnation.

Father Roger-Thomas Calmel read the mercy of the Apostle and to cat

The author of these remarks appeals to history, to that of Pope Pius VI, for example, who, in 1790, had indeed condemned the anticlerical legislation of the revolution. Christ says: “Render to Caesar what is Caesar’s”, but the Apocalypse adds in substance: “A curse on Caesar’s Rome” (p. 129). For humanity is in fact in a situation of fall and redemption and not in a “chemically pure” state. Evil must therefore be denounced, whether it be personal sin, political insults or also “the organisms of subversion within the Church itself” (p. 130). This last remark shows the author’s lucidity about current events. In short, “to preach the Gospel with the bias of not condemning the world is to preach the Gospel with the bias of reaching a humanity that does not exist. ” (p. 130)

One suspects, however, that Father Calmel will not stop there: “To pronounce anathema, to promote Christian temporal institutions: all this is, in a certain way, the office of the pastor; and yet pastoral care is not primarily that. “The good shepherd is the one who resembles the good Shepherd, who gives his life for his sheep and who tries to

win the lost sheep from the fold. To characterize these men of God, “we speak rather of holiness, purity, transformation in Christ, evangelical charity, fire of love” (p. 134). True pastoral ministry is the ardent search for holiness, first in oneself and then in others. For everything is connected:

The more the apostle is burned with zeal for the sheep within and the sheep without, or even for the ravening wolves, the more he will have to remain clear-sighted and have the courage to pass judgment and condemnation on the political formations hostile to the faith.

All things considered, this abusive use of the term “pastoral” concealed a new conception of ecclesiastical ministry.

A new conception of the apostolate On the occasion of a reflection on priestly celibacy, Father Calmel spoke of the new way of looking at preaching:

It is characterized by four perfectly aberrant notes: first, that the men to be evangelized and converted are not supposed to be

He is lucid about subversive maneuvers, and adds that the most dangerous are the people who are to be evangelized and converted (p. 88-89).

aligned with communism (without wanting to see it) and with Masonic humanitarianism is working to impose itself on the real Church, that of the Councils, and not that which is said to be the Council, as if the Church began in 1962 (…) I know a little better every day that the Virgin can only support and surround those who want to be with the Church,

He reminded everyone of the Gospel: “If the world hates you, know that it has hated me first” (Jn 15:18) and urged them to follow Christ on his way to the Cross.

The Church and the world

The ambiguities and weaknesses of the Council were showing their misdeeds especially in the field of the Church’s relations with the political world. Father Calmel, who had so often meditated and preached on Christianity and its enemies, was not at all disposed to follow this general alignment of Catholics with the atheistic power.

The first signal in this area was given by Pope John XXIII’s encyclical Pacem in tirris on 11 April 1963. This document had a major influence on the spirit of the Council fathers and on the course of the Council. After having affirmed the freedom of each person “to profess his or her religion in private and public life” (no. 15), and after having taken up the great principles of personalism, the Pontiff called for the establishment of “a public authority of universal competence” (no. 134). He also welcomed the founding of the United Nations on June 26, 1945 (no. 139), and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of December 10, 1948. Consequently, the Pope called on all the Catholic faithful “to participate actively” (no. 143), to “collaborate loyally” (no. 155) in the establishment of this “world community” (no. 9). The encyclical received warm praise from all over the world. But far from rejoicing, Father Calmel saw it as a cause for concern. In a private letter, he remarked:

The thunder of applause that accompanies John XXIII is very painful: because at last he is congratulated for an attitude and words that have nothing to do with his ministry as

steward of the kingdom of grace; secular and laicist congratulations’.

In the end, the ecclesiastical authorities gave the impression of wanting to put the holy Church in the wake of the “sense of history”, of the world government that was being established more and more openly. Whereas the primitive Church had been able to transform and sanctify the pax romana, today it was following the pax americana;

We are in a world which refuses the love of the crucified one and which pretends to find and organize its supreme satisfaction in business, comfort, pleasure and leisure. This will, which expresses a Luciferian pride, explains the practical refusal to believe in sin and to accept asceticism and conversion. Satan is working with great zeal to organize this world in the direction of the American pax, the total domestication of humans by the State is still the best means he has found to realize his project. (...) The misfortune is that many “zealous” priests do not really believe in God or the devil, lack doctrine, (...) preach the humanitarian development of the planet (globalization, as they say) and not eternal life, and have a fundamental contempt for contemplation. Was the pontificate of Paul VI going to rectify the situation? The first encyclical of the new pope, Ecclesiam suam, of August 6, 1964, set the tone. According to his usual method, Father Calmel took his time. In order to avoid any prejudice, he wanted to have access to the text ofificieH’-‘ and gave it a first sympathetic reading. He then wrote:

The encyclical is reassuring. (…) The Holy Father’s encyclical condemns - with great gentleness or skill, but condemns all the same - the follies that now cover the world (…): apostolic mimicry of priests who no longer wish to distinguish themselves from the laity; syncretism (…); irenicism (…); modernism (…)’.

However, the hindsight, and undoubtedly the reception of the encyclical in the Church and in the world, revealed its shortcomings:

dcligut I l’O.N.U” that he has the nerve to call a Lenten commandment of a bishop of Jesus Christ! BcnVlia.” (Letter of February 27, 1965) ‘ ^ Algrne de

il4 -Letter from Biarritz, August 22, 1964.” ‘ ^ ‘

Even though it condemns errors, the general thrust of the exhortation (it is indeed an exhortation rather than a doctrinal exposition) does not inspire me with much confidence. There are some very curious omissions… Paul VI quotes Leo XIII, Pius XI, Pius XII with praise, he covers John XXIII with flowers, and there is total and surely intended silence on St. Pius X. And so many paragraphs that do not reassure me… And so many paragraphs that do not reassure me… For although he speaks once or twice of Satan, he writes the whole of his encyclical on the action of the Church in the modern world as if the modern world were not all permeated by the principles of the devil, by antiChristian principles. This is not the way St. Paul approached the pagan world. Now our world is opposed to Christ, worse than pagan.

However, this bad impression left no room for despair; I know more and more that the Lord will not abandon his Church, no matter who the pope is; I know more and more that insufficient and enigmatic popes (as Paul VI seems to be) are allowed by Jesus not to discourage us, but to make us redouble our faith and love and trust. I know this more and more^‘h

Reform or revolution?

No one doubted, at the beginning of the sixties, that the Church, in its clergy as well as in its faithful, was in need of reform. The influences of the revolution over the last two hundred years, the assaults of communism and Freemasonry, the revival of modernism from 1930 onwards, the devastating wars, and many other reasons had considerably weakened the spirit of faith and the ardor of charity, while the decadence of the clergy scandalized the faithful. In order to face such a situation, to reach the superior balance, that of holiness, that of charity which is at the same time joy of truth and horror of error, love of souls and hatred of evil, the Church needed more than ever a reform. A council in the 20th century should be a council of reform. The question that should have been asked first of all was the nature of an authentic reform. The temptation was strong to turn things upside down, to look with envy at false religions and the world and to look elsewhere for what the Church of our time lacked.

Father Calmel addressed the issue in April 1965, in an article entitled “Ambiguous Evangelism:

It is always to be redone; but it is precisely fidelity to the Church in its unchanging constitution that allows it to be redone all the time. It is here that it is essential to grasp that the Church's constitution, by virtue of the fact that charity is consubstantial with it, is full of life, the bearer of all new beginnings, an inexhaustible and pure source; by itself this constitution makes humble and open minds, generous hearts and friends of risk. Its faithful expression is an expression of youth. (…)

The principle of renewal in the Church and of reforms worthy of the name is not located next to its constitution, much less against it, but at the very heart of it (…).

It is a progress not by indefinite substitution of the new for the old as in the material order - in mechanics for example - but a progress by an intimate and always new participation in an immutable reality as in the order of the spirit, in contemplation, friendship or love.

Holiness, and therefore any authentic spirit of reform, are not to be sought outside the constitution and Tradition of the Church. They are the fruit of it. "The Gospel is not opposed to the Church, for the Church with its constitution is the Gospel continued."

But what is happening in the Church today? Rather than a reform, we are witnessing a revolution, a "brigandage". The following passages show how much Father Calmel had matured his reflection on revolutionary techniques. Events had forced him to analyze the process of subversion and the ways of error.

As I reflected on the revolution. (…) it seemed to me that it had three decisive characteristics: not to remedy abuses but to attack the very nature of things"; not to bring noble and

generous tendencies and wise aspirations for renewal to fruition, but to confiscate them for the benefit of destruction and thus to poison them; not to dominate by a visible authority, even if it be tyrannical, but to enslave by an occult authority, against which recourse is almost impossible, because it resembles a poison spread in the fabric of the social body.

117 - After the closing of the Council, Father Calmel wrote to Father Dulac: “Would it be imprudent to begin to lift the veil? to bring to light the proofs of brigan%! (Letter of December 2, 1967).

314 Father Roger-Thomas Calmel

The second point of this revolutionary strategy is quite remarkable. While God uses the evil he has not done for good, the devil uses the good to do evil. Here are some examples (p. 160): Must the Church be close to the world to save it? Let us transform this proximity of mercy into complicity. Is the Christian called to the mystical life? Let us make spirituality an instrument of destruction of the natural order. Is the priest the servant of his brothers? Let him become a social animator. Shouldn't the Church be poor like Christ? Let us empty it of all hierarchical power. Father Calmel illustrates the fact with recent events: For example, if at some point in the history of the Church, the need is felt for a biblical, liturgical, missionary or "lay" renewal, if this renewal is in the air, see how the revolution will go about circumventing it, capturing it, falsifying it. First, the traditional and living Christians who were going to make the renewal flourish in fidelity to the Tradition of the Church are pushed aside; revolutionaries are put in place who want renewal against Tradition and the Gospel against the Church: Little by little the Christian people, horribly fooled, are taught to read Scripture against traditional theology, to celebrate the liturgy against adoration and recollection, to magnify marriage against consecrated virginity, to exalt evangelical poverty against private property, to become apostles of unbelievers by disregarding faith and baptism. This incredible detour, this art of confiscating in order to distort, is quite essential to the revolution.

These unnatural procedures would certainly lead to revolt, to a surs.iut of common sense and love of truth. The revolution

knows it well, that’s why it has put in the pxxint its third part:

The revolution has combined a terrible apparatus of enslavement; the victims are held and tied up by an occult system of power that is hidden everywhere; parallel hierarchies, transmission belts, infiltration, manipulation of opinion in order to manipulate minds and consciences, in short all the techniques of secret societies and their police procedures. Now this unheard-of way of exercising authority is consubstantial with the revolution.

Iin definitive, the progressives -v have made the Gospel fall from its supernatural aldnide to flatten it to the level of the impure aspirations of the city man” (p. 1601. That is why the fart Calmel raises the glance, and it hits it with 1 Apotalyp,sc. There he finds U revelation of the tôrccs in pccsence. of the strategy of the demon and the splendid answer of the Cid :

Many times I have meditated on the end of the world. The consideration of this limit case in the history of our species allows us to better clarify the nature of the action of the devil”, but also the supreme resources of the power and the love of Christ crucified (p. 161-162).

Moreover, since revolution is essentially a revolt against any intervention of God in human life, the first weapon of counter-revolution consists in an ardent and generous supernatural life. This is why Father Calmel proposes to his readers, in June 1965, a peaceful and contemplative exposition of Catholic theology on the supernatural: “Our resistance will be all the more effective if we aim at the

central point, the hidden focus from which the infection is organized and which is the total alteration of the supernatural. “It is a question of returning to the great truths of the faith, to the heavenly goods “that the eye of man has not seen, that his heart cannot imagine”, “it is important to strengthen ourselves in the faith because the evil of modernism consists in emptying religion of the supernatural, to destroy it from within by the evacuation of all supernatural”, either by separating nature and grace, or by confusing them in “an endless overcoming, an endless evolution, an indefinite promotion, technical and revolutionary, of humanity”.

However much the preachers of progressivism and reconciliation with the modern world may say, this primacy of supernatural truth and life does not go without a certain asceticism, without a certain “contempt for the world”. This is the subject of the article in ‘Itinéraires’ of July-August 1965 where Father Calmel comments on the post-communion of the feast of the Sacred Heart which prays to obtain “to despise the things of the earth and to love the things of Heaven”. To those who claim that the Church would be guilty, because of its intransigence, of the progressive estrangement from the world, he presents traditional theology, the imposing figure of Saint John of the Cross, but above all the Holy Liturgy and finally the Apocalypse. As a good Thomist, he makes the objective serve to bring to light the truth of the Gospel.

(neore by the complicit docility of the Christians and first of all of the deluded clerics. ” (p. 163)

310 - He explains in a letter of April 2, 1965: “A little more each day I note to what

Jüir. IC watches, prays, I continue according to my forces to give the light. You will see one of my articles

321 - “Doctrinal note on the subject of the supernatural oidrc >>. Itineraries ^94. June 1965. p. 40 and following.

322 “The contempt of the world”, Itinéraires n” 95. July 1965. p. 198 and sv.

One (■pisode sums up very well the distress of many zealous priests who could follow closely the progress of the Council. A great friend of Father Calmel’s, Father Berto, had been chosen by Archbishop Lefebvre to be his special theologian during two sessions of the Council. Just after his return from the third session, Father Berto was visited in Pontcallec by a Tertiary of Minicainc who knew him well. She immediately wrote down her impressions; I saw a face ravaged by the suffering of the soul, a physically exhausted being. In my emotion, I went forward in silence... I sat down at the corner of the table, as usual. I looked at him for a few seconds and he himself said nothing... Then answering my silent question; “We are at the bottom of the wave... In five years, in ten years perhaps, it will be the great darkness; perhaps we will see it, perhaps we will not see it. “Father was devastated; he could hardly see and his eyes seemed lifeless; an immense sorrow seemed to emanate from him.

Beyond the writings, which were not yet known in their integrity, the facts that were claimed by them confirmed, among the most vigilant priests and faithful, this profound disarray.

On December 4, 1965, the “observers” representing the false religions at the Council were invited to a common “divine service” in the Basilica of St. Paul Outside the Muts, with the Pope and the Council Fathers, in which they wanted to “raise a common and intimate prayer. Protestants and Catholics alternated in reading passages from Scripture, and the Anglicans sang their songs. In his address, the Pope quoted Soloviev, the ecumenical theologian, and invited Christianity, in the name of the Council’s decrees, to repeat such experiences: Such common “divine services” “are not only permitted from time to time, but desired.

On December 7, Pope Paul VI handed over to the representative of the Orthodox Patriarch Athenagoras 1” the bull that cancelled the excommunication of the Orthodox of 1054; “We deeply regret the unjust words and actions of the past. We delete from the memory of the Church the excommunication issued at that time and declare it null and void; it must be forgotten and buried. “At the same time, the Orthodox Patriarch Athenagoras received in Constantinople a delegate of the pope to whom he handed over a brief which lifted the “excommunication” imposed on the pope’s legate (Cardinal Humbert, 1054),

Such public acts were more eloquent and devastating than the written word, and an example from so high up encouraged the boldest initiatives.

Father Calmel watched these upheavals with a heavy heart. Around him, in the Dominican Order as well as in the parishes, a vengeance of madness was ravaging everything. He was thinking, of course, of the honor of God scorned, but

also of the poor distraught souls betrayed by their leaders. For, while the “springtime of the Church” was being sung everywhere, the priest could see the decadence of the Christian people:

Moreover, the news he received from Gagnol was not much better. On March 7, 1965 (or 1966?), his father wrote him;

Dear son,

I am writing to you in spite of myself. But we live in troubled times.

Our ancestors built beautiful and solid churches that the most terrible wars did not demolish. And what is most terrible is that in these churches, by order of the bishop of Agen, he has the holy table removed. I was even told that if he had the money, he would have the altar demolished.

The holy table was brought out in Sauveterre, in Fumel, in Libos, in Blanquefort.

It is in marble, but it must be taken out before April 26. (…) On April 26, this bishop, if no one prevents him, will have done a lot of damage, (…) I believe that dark times are being prepared for us and I am very unhappy to be so paralyzed.

A week later, the old man told a family friend;

Yesterday the parish priest of Sauveterre came to discuss, but the XXX’s are not in agreement. When Monseigneur comes in two weeks, we will talk about it. But the parish priest of Sauveterre, a Dutchman, demolished the altar of the church of Lastreille and also the pulpit. He is a great priest.

He is two meters tall. I hope that his size will not intimidate anyone “*. Then, on April 28, 1966:

M, the mayor of Lastreilles said to him (to Jean) in a letter that he had a very great demolisher of altars and pulpits in Sauveterre. That cannot last like that.

c from Biarritz, August 8 i

I

Calmei’s sister-in-law, who combines so well the Christian faith, the good sense of the people and her strong Rouergue accent, was present in 1969 at a very significant scene. She wrote to her brother-in-law:

Dear Father and brother. (…)

Our priest, after the Gospel, distributed questionnaires and pencils. We had to fill them in immediately to find out which magazine we subscribed to, and whether we were part of the union. It seems that it was for the bishopric, but I don’t understand it. I don’t think we should pay too much attention to all that, but I understand that our bishop must be a revolutionary

The judgement of this good countrywoman was very accurate. The methods employed betrayed the know-how of professional subversives. The revolution is a block,” said Clemenceau, “in terms of its conception of the world and its method of world domination. In the Church, it is the same.

One can understand the indignation of the priest at the sight of those pastors “who have the cowardice to abandon their flock. “, and of the maneuvers of the enemies of God free and even encouraged to work as they please in the holy Church of Christ, while “the pope is there to guard the Tradition and not to let create another one (that of the revolutionary movement). “

Nevertheless, if the declarations of the Council and the Council Fathers foreshadowed cruel separations, they left the theologian in great peace. Two months after the closing of the Vatican Council 11, the son of St. Dominic affirmed his assurance:

Since the Council has not defined any truth of faith or condemned any error, well, error will have free rein. As for the authority of the Council… it has not defined anything; so we are not obliged - by virtue of faith - to take seriously what they tell us. For Jesus’ sake, we will not turn with the wind. But we know that we will be more and more isolated.

Above all, in a way that was customary for him, the religious saw in the misfortunes of the times a call from God to a more fervent love. “We have enough grace to sanctify ourselves and the Church holds on,” he often said. To a

32S - Letter from M “* Georçette Calmel to Father Calmel. 2nd teexier 1969. .^26 - Kiurcticn of October 9, 1969.

327-l.cttrc of July 12, 1969.

I blessed it, asking ajesus that each of the hours it will mark will bring me closer to him and transform me into him. - This

is the only way I can continue the fight he asks me to wage against the onslaught of the darkness of hell; the heresy is unleashed." More than ever, with the same constancy and ardor, he felt inclined to "continue his ministry as a preacher, by word and deed, with great confidence in Jesus.

At the end of the Council, Father Calmel was fifty-one years old. Ten years later, with the benefit of hindsight, he was able to analyze for himself the grace that had enabled him to overcome the storms of Church life and the vexations of which he was the victim. In a private interview in 1974, he summarized the first fifty years of his life in this way. The discussion was about psychological weaknesses or illnesses, about neuroses, complexes, atavisms, associations of ideas. He answered:

The remedy is in the love of the light (or in the virtue, or the prudence that makes one accept the light and behave according to the light). If I did not become encysted at 14, at 28, at 49, (and at 40) it is because before God I preferred the light'".

He admitted that the struggles and tears of the past had been a providential preparation for greater struggles. At the age of 14, he faced the superficiality of his confreres in the minor seminary; at 28 (1942-1943), he discovered the beginnings of the decadence of his Order; During the years 1954-1955, on his 40th birthday, he was unjustly condemned by the Congregation of Religious and Dominicans of Toulouse because of his influence with the Dominican Sisters of the Holy Name of Jesus; finally, in 1963-1964, at the age of 49, he had to face the modernist avalanche that was falling on the Church and on his Order.

On each occasion, the religious had known how to keep silent about his own feelings, to take the side of the light, to

stand before God and to receive from him the ability to defend his rights and his truth in peace and goodness.

c df Biarritz, July 27, 1964.

Matthew and Heloise Calmcl

Father Calmel in front of Gagnol's house

The church where he was baptized on May 13, 1914

In sixth grade at the minor seminary (1926-1927)

Taking the cassock at the minor seminary

of BonEncontre, near Agen (1930)

In second grade (1930-1931)

Student in the third grade (1929-193U)

Novice at the convent of Saint-Maximin (1936-1937)

General and actual view of the convent of Saint-Maximin and of the city

Brother Marie-Thomas Calmel (1936)

Community of the convent of Biarritz in October 1963 (from left to right, Fathers Calmel, Olive, Chanson, Valette and Perret)

Final corrections of an article for the review Itinéraires, at Jean Madiran's office

In 1960

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The crmitagc of Saint Mary Magdalene

In Jonquières, between 1963 and 1968

With Bishop Marcel Lefebvre (1970)

In Toulon in 1970. “There is a watchfulness of sanctity. “

19

Sorèze

Father Calmel’s articles in Itinéraires and in a few conservative newspapers, such as La Nation française or L’Opinion, his preaching calling for a reform of intelligence and morals everywhere in France, his personal life of prayer and study did not leave anyone indifferent. His lofty views and doctrinal rigor certainly attracted friends, but also violent opposition, among others among his Dominican brothers. Taking advantage of the openings made by the Second Vatican Council, many of them were in fact carried away by a violent current of decadence and thus created a gap between their way of life and the Tradition of the Church and of the Order. How then to continue a fraternal common life and a frank collaboration? From 1963, the friar preacher began to dream of a healthier situation where he could better live his vocation of prayer, study and preaching. He wrote at the time;

If such a house (religious) were looking for a chaplain, I wonder if (seeing the conditions of climate and replacements for my trips to Paris) I would not take on a ministry of this kind, while remaining a Dominican, of course; because, even if they do not close here (Biarritz) (and I do not believe that they do), it is so chaotic among the Dominicans in France!I am not discouraged; I am only

thinking of finding better conditions to continue my written work - since I believe that the Lord expects it of me.

The Prior Provincial understood the situation very well. Because of his obligation to sell the convent at Biarritz, he thought of assigning Father Calmel to the vicariate of Prouilhe, twenty kilometers from Carcassonne and sixty from Toulouse. At this news, received at the beginning of October 1963, the interested party was very happy, envisaging in advance the vast field of apostolate that would open up before him. He could already see himself organizing courses with friends in Toulouse, and finding more opportunities to meet his dear Dominican daughters f “I will be in the main region of my friendships, Toulouse, Carcassonne, Pamiers, Castres,” he wrote on October 22.

However, Providence seemed to want to test the patience of the religious, always putting off the realization of this beautiful project, while in Biarritz and in the Order, the situation only got worse. With the loyalty that characterized him, Father Calmel spoke to the Master General, Father Anicetus Fernandez (1962-1974) in a letter dated February 28, 1964. A few months later, he wrote with satisfaction: “Our General will recommend my case, since my case belongs to a higher authority than his own; he approves of my writings very much. I wait in peace^” “In the meantime,” he relates, “life in this ghost of a convent has something very comical (I think it’s better to take it that way), with an old Spanish Capuchin who comes to help us and a simple-minded old boy who replaces the porter brother when the latter is tired. “Thanks be to God, the sale of the convent in Biarritz was decided at the beginning of September and

from then on the two fathers only had to wait for their “roadmap” from the Prior Provincial.

The priest of Jesus Christ thought especially of the “poor weak souls” whom his departure would deprive of support and light. Certainly, following his last sermon “on fidelity to our vocation to perfect love”, some old ladies congratulated and thanked him, but the results of his stay in Biarritz seemed to him to be weak: “The pain for an apostle is to note that for four years here, I have only been able to reach people in their seventies - here (not in Paris or anywhere else) - because our chapel is only attended by the faithful when they are over sixty or ‘seventy’. “Nevertheless, as far as he was concerned, he remained at peace: “I am not worried. I feel that St. Dominic takes care of me.

grapes, fruit, and three fine bottles - which I gave away. I feel sorry for all those poor people, those little ones who came to confession and prayed.

However, it was not towards Prouilhe that he was heading then, but towards Sorèîc, in the Tarn.

Chiz le père Lacordaire

Because of the various imperatives of the province, Prouilhe’s project could not succeed. It was in the house of Father Lacordaire that Father Calmel arrived in the second half of October 1964. The buildings were full of history. Located in a beautiful site at the foot of the Montagne Noire, in the diocese of Albi, Sorèze is an ancient Benedictine abbey, founded under the reign of Pepin the Short. Over the centuries, the nobility of the region came here to learn at the school attached to the monastery. Later, King Louis XVI established it as a “royal and military school”.

On August 8, 1854, the establishment passed into the hands of the Dominicans. Throughout his life as a priest and then as a Dominican, Father Lacordaire had indeed thought that he had to take care of children left to the teaching of the State. It was only after a few years of ministry and after having collaborated in the restoration of his Order in France that he was given the opportunity to realize his dream;

The directors of the college of Oullins, founded in 1833 by priests, asked and obtained that their establishment become the property of the State.

to meet to chant the canonical office did not allow the teachers to face their task and to devote themselves to the students. Lacordaire then instituted a third order, devoted to teaching, whose rule was less strict. In 1852, the foundation of this third order was authorized by the Master General.

In 1854, the school of Sorèze was added to that of Oullins. Father Lacordaire, at the end of his mandate as prior provincial, was finally able to devote himself personally “to the teaching of youth, thus realizing the most ancient dream of his priestly existence. The school had its glory years at the beginning of the 20th century.

In 1964, the community had nine members. Among them, four SC fathers devoted themselves to teaching, the rest of the school’s life being conducted by lay people. Certainly, Father Calmel could feel uncomfortable in this teaching work. Mother Hélène was worried about this; “Your provincial has not yet understood that you are not a teaching Father î I think rather that he listens, without hearing, to the last one who speaks and does not really follow, does not really carry in a fatherly heart, any of his sons. This is the great deficiency of superiors and superiors. “

Nevertheless, the fart Calmel, as usual, took his new assignment willingly. All the more so since the vast house and the tranquility of the place promised him the necessary calm to continue writing. Above all,” he wrote, “I plan to have meetings and gatherings in Toulouse, which is forty

kilometers away. (…) I feel much more serene than in the changes of 1954,1956 and even 1960*. “

The newcomer was welcomed fraternally by his brothers in religion. Moreover, since the latter were very busy with their students, and most of them were already of advanced age, the preacher brother would not be worried much about his ideas and his works. Above all, since he was a little removed from the community, he could already rejoice in the new facilities he found for leading his contemplative life: “I have more time to pray. May Jesus send me his Holy Spirit. For it is so obvious that the transformation of the innermost being into love can only come from the Spirit of Jesus. “

V God and Freedom. Le livre de poche chrécicn, 1959, p. 2

Obviously, the more the enemies of God made noise and attacked Tradition, the more the religious yearned for a mystical union with God. This was not to hide from the sad reality as the ostrich, it is said, buries its head in the sand or under its wing, but to have the height that God wants, to face the evils that God allows.

Already at that time, Father Calmel complained about those who did not want to see the limits of the Pope. When Pope John XXIII died on June 3, 1963, some conservative writers thought it wise to praise the deceased, making him a “great admirer of St. Pius X.” They wanted absolutely to make the Pope of Vatican II a tireless defender of the Tradition that they wanted to serve. The Dominican summed up his thoughts in this way;

It is easier (and more honest) to accept once and for all

- that the Pope can make enormous mistakes in everything that concerns temporal government (independence of Algeria, summoning the Patriarch of Moscow to the Council, opening the aula of St. Peter to journalists during the Council, etc.),

- that these faults are spiritually disastrous,

- that nevertheless he keeps and maintains the faith and the morals and that for this reason the Lord Jesus assists him

And, still in private, he regretted that Pope Paul VI was extending and intensifying the path opened by his predecessor. For the moment, the theologian was not concerned with doctrine: “For what directly affects the faith, he is surely moving in the right direction,” but it was his actions that worried him; his praise for the “young nations” delivered to the communists, the elevation to the cathedral of Bishop Duval of Algiers, *etc.* However, his words were without bitterness. He wanted to keep a great lucidity to see things as they are, but a lucidity pacified and enlightened by faith.

Moreover, it was not the events in Rome that affected him the most at that time. The fruits of the Council manifested themselves to him first in the life of the clergy. His correspondence gives an idea of the situation of the French parishes:

The commentaries of the Gospel (by the parish priests) are made in the sense of a rather socialist human solidarity, the sense of a chimerical arrangement of the planet, the sense of a cordial agreement between all religions

who all have the same value, in the sense finally of an expeditious help called apostolate and of an American optimism or of a training in good humor called charity. But none of this really represents the religion of the Lord: hence the malaise of souls, (…)

Let us live close enough to the Lord to remain in peace in these times of confusion and apostasy.

I have received other parish bulletins; it is the same everywhere: a felicitousness of religion in the name of the salvation of the world; a misguided apostolic zeal - and that because one does not want to accept the contradiction of the world: one does not love Jesus enough for that… "3 Father Calmel preached during the Holy Days of 1966 in Viviers-la-Montagne, in the Tarn. He later admitted: "Holy Week was difficult (three parishes!), not very encouraging (thick routine and a priest - a brave one - who wants to overcome it with the modern means of the new liturgy), absence of a deep prayer life." And, as usual, he rebounded: "How little the Lord is loved! Let us love him. "

Unfortunately, the example came from above, from the bishops of France who championed the change. Father Calmel wrote in the diocesan bulletin of the churches of Metz: "According to their articles, the devil and the 'world' do not exist and we do not have to evangelize sinners; we ourselves are not sinners: it is enough to make us cry. May Our Lady have mercy." Soon, a new exceptional measure, this time episcopal, was going to affect the preaching brother. He had already begun to give private lessons to friends in Toulouse. This increasingly regular presence of the intrepid defender of the faith alerted the archbishop who, on March 13, 1965, refused him the right to preach throughout his diocese:

Another test (…). 11 cannot take away the right or the possibility to meet friends in Toulouse itself, nor to distribute my papers to them and talk about them afterwards. But this is not the same kind of ministry. He made his decision known when my prior asked him to preach a recollection in Toulouse on April 4. The reason for his refusal: “He is writing in Itinéraires. “He could not prevent me from doing so, since it was a matter for the General, who agreed. The saddest thing in all this is that many secular priests and religious clearly

11 - Letter of February 8, 1965.

12 - Letter of April 1965.

14 . Letter of February 19, 1965.

Father Calmel knew where he stood. The “openness” advocated by Vatican II was a one-way street. From now on, to defend the faith and to live the treasures of Tradition, it would be necessary to be pointed out more and more, even to be sanctioned by the authorities. Far from discouraging him, this new exclusion renewed his zeal. On February 8, he had expressed his determination to live “close enough to the Lord to remain in peace in these times of confusion and apostasy. On March 30, the day after the anniversary of his ordination, he wrote:

Our Lord will keep me day by day so that I may be the minister of redemption with the prudence of the serpent and the simplicity of the dove; prudence of the serpent by having no illusions about the malice and means of the devil (but many priests in this regard are unconscious puppets); simplicity of the dove by not seeking me at all, and by being sure of the victory of Jesus Christ. But what distress in many souls because of the betrayal of the priests”! However, this

assurance did not go without saying. Sometimes the religious complained that he did not have “the desired calm”. He was convinced that “we are in the phase of the last days of the world (even if this phase lasts for a century or more)” and he saw no reason “why the darkness should not yet progress”. And every time Ton introduced some evil change in Rome, “one may expect it, but one suffers every time”. But the supernatural soon took over; “Then we return to the peace of the Lord. “With a movement of wings, the soul regained its height: “May the Lord give me to receive the full grace of Easter - which is a grace of invincible confidence in his victory, of peace and lightness. (…) We must remember all the more that this phase always belongs to the era of the Redemption, that Mary is all the closer to us” The situation of the Dominican Order was not better than that of the clerThis is a real “debacle” wrote Father Calmel as early as August 1963, he spoke of “chaos among the Dominicans of France

In my Order, the defrockings are multiplying. Another one this week in Marseille, (a Dominican) has established himself in Aix and must publish a book to marry priests. On November 6, 1964, for example, he could rejoice: “In the convent of Toulouse - where I will go often from now on - I had never been so well received: marvel! “However, such benevolence did not make him blind. In the convent of Toulouse, on July 14, 1965, he was able to see how “the young Dominican students” were most often “impervious to Thomism” and in a “kind of revolt”. (…) “The situation of the Order (everywhere) is worrying”, for sure, and some professors are more or less aware of it. One of them even

encouraged him to finish the study on the real presence and transubstantiation that he had begun.

Since then, the elders have spoken. One of them, Father Jean-Miguel Garrigues, tells how, when he entered the Dominican convent of Le Saulchoir in September 1964, television was almost obligatory: “We were encouraged to watch certain programs in order to know the culture in which we would have to transmit the Word of God. (…) It would be more accurate to say that we put ourselves in its wake, absorbing what it (television) insidiously conveys.” At the Saulchoir, during his three years of philosophy (1964-1967), he studied and read more phenomenology, Heidegger, and the “masters of suspicion” (Marx, Nietzsche, Freud) than Saint Thomas Aquinas. And during his years of theology, he never studied the moral part of the Summa Theologica of Saint Thomas Aquinas. Is it any wonder that these teachers trained revolutionaries or liberals? Yes, they “followed” the world, rather than trying to convert it, and they enjoyed the most hideous spectacles on television.

In the convent of Toulouse, where Father Calmel stayed for long periods of time to carry out his work, there were still a few Fathers who wished to remain faithful (in the order of piety and doctrine), but who could only remain “in solitude, because the conventual community is not governed; everything is going to hell”. The good ones had to keep quiet while the more

The good were to remain silent while the most revolutionary of the religious could carry out their campaigns of destruction in complete freedom.

Certainly, the solution to such a situation could only come from Heaven: “May Saint Dominic obtain for us great saints. The remedy is there”, he wrote on January 14, 1966. However, a very Dominican frankness led him to address the superiors. A visit to the Province of Toulouse by the Master General in February 1966 gave him the opportunity. On January 18, he received a letter from his friend Father Lavaud, who told him that the Master General, then in Toulouse, “does not realize the evil of the Order in France. Will he understand? In any case, and while doing what is possible for an improvement, I must know to the bottom of my heart that if the decadence continues - and it is quite probable - this misfortune is permitted by love and I must respond with a lot of love, overcoming the temptation of weariness.

The meeting took place on February 24. On the one hand, Father Calmel was edified by the real piety of the Master General who received him very kindly. He spoke to him and gave him a memorandum composed in Spanish, to which he attached some recent progressive articles by Dominicans in Paris, as well as documents on certain Dominicans published by Michel de Saint-Pierre in his work Lamtti Colères, which the Master of the Order did not know. However, he did not find in this 71 year old priest the daring character that the situation demanded. I believe that he lacks too much to grasp what remains of our Order at the present time. (…) 11 approves of my writing, but he has no desire to fight; he imagines that - at the present time - it would be possible for him to support the traditional fathers and at the same time to avoid the turmoil, the noise and the condemnation of the progressives; in the end he sees the evil as less serious than it really is.

On the other hand, if the others do not do their duty, Father Calmel does not think he is exempt from doing his:

I have very little hope for improvement; yet I continue to seek improvement and fight against evil. This is not a desperate struggle. It is the struggle of a priest who sees that the Lord is asking him to be faithful in the night.

Father Calmel's position in this accelerated decadence is wonderfully expressed in a personal note he wrote on the occasion of his priestly jubilee on March 29, 1966. After twenty-five years of priesthood, witnessing in spite of himself the apostasy of many and the collapse of his Order, he wrote

How long do I have to live? The state of decadence of my Order, the trial so great that the Church is going through, so much pain and temptation are allowed in view of a greater love for you.

I seem to have grown in faith and trust and love over the last 25 years (and not just in theological wisdom), but may I grow much more, my Lord.

So many wonderful friendships (…), may I not disappoint them.

The daily sacrifice of the Holy Sacrifice: may the immolated Jesus deign to transform me into him.

How can this state of a hardened, dried-up soul - busy doing harm and not wanting the light - how can such a state not be a mortal sin? - And why do fathers or sisters come to this point? Because for a moment they have gone against the light. What an overhang this liturgical music hall is, which by its very nature removes the conditions for prayer.

The Catholic reaction

In the face of the “upheaval” orchestrated by many men of Eglisc, many faithful and priests stood up to keep the faith.

- The faithful get organized

Isolated Christians tried to save what they could of the dogmas, morals and liturgy of the past, encouraged priests who resisted novelties, prayed with all their heart for the Church. From Gagnol, from his friends in Lorraine, from those he directed and from his correspondents, Father Calmel received edifying testimonies of faithfulness to Tradition.

Elsewhere, the faithful were beginning to organize themselves and appeal to his science and judgment. It was increasingly understood that to keep the faith, in this time of revolution, it was necessary to study and pray more than ever.

On March 1, 1964, Father Calmel was invited to preach a recollection for about twenty students who had come to know him through Itinéraires.

On January 16, 1965, he inaugurated his “Toulouse courses” on the theology of history. A few student friends, fathers and mothers, wanted to create a study circle around him, which would be called the Saint Thomas Aquinas Circle. “A small group of young people is all eager” he wrote on December 18, 1964, before he had even begun. It looks good,” he wrote on December 22, 1964. I know what I want them to grasp; that the Lord is there, that we must know Him with all our being; that this faith sets up and holds in peace our

daily struggle, however difficult it may be. It also shows the importance that St. Dominic’s son attached to this new form of apostolate:

There is one thing that I see better; a certain number of lay people, in the present darkness, do not accept to be fooled, they realize that the devil wants to confuse them and demolish the Church, they are decided to fight.

But they can hardly find a priest, if not one who has escaped the progressive trend, at least one who has the courage and strength to show that they have escaped it. When they do find one, they are comforted, delighted, and willing to listen. It seems to me that I am one of these priests. I will try to meet their expectations. Besides, I have no bad feelings towards the deluded priests: I pray for them; but I don’t think I can reach them - except in exceptional cases; because they have let themselves be poisoned (by lack of courage or faith, by weakness, by interest) in a “psycho-sociological system” of the devil; as Peregrinus (Madiran) explains.

The courses were held at the rate of two per month. They were attended by about twenty-five students. On March 7, the feast of St. Thomas Aquinas was celebrated with a mass at 7:00 a.m. in the Saint-Thomas aurel of the church of Saint-Sernin in Toulouse. Convinced that science could only become life through prayer and self-reflection, the preacher even proposed a recollection to his listeners on Sunday, March 21. The last meeting took place on March 20, 1965. “This course was definitely blessed by God,” he wrote a year later.

26-Lcitrc of January 2, 1965.

27 - It was on this occasion, no doubt, that the archbishop of Ibulouse spoke out against Father Calmel and forbade him any preaching in his diocese (March 13, 1965).

Calmel, in particular by the three religious vocations that he gave rise to and by the marriage of “two good lovebirds: he and she, former students of my “étoile-filante” course. It is a great consolarion, because they have a sense (which has become rare) of the seriousness and sanctity of the state of marriage.

Other regions called for Father Calmel’s doctrinal and spiritual support. On Sunday, June 14, 1964, he preached at the Vivières pilgrimage in the Aisne region, organized by M “* Colette Prieur, secretary of the Saint-François de Sales work. “This is the place where the relics of Saint Clotilde are kept. He returned there on June 20, 1965 to preach on the theme: “Hope against all hope” (Rm 4, 18), then on June 19, 1966. In his preaching on St. Clotilde, he tried to make people understand “that we must hold on without saying to ourselves, “What’s the use?” For God wants it and it is good for souls. To hold on also without doubting that we are with the Church. For we are with the Church. “Father Calmel finds in this great French saint the confirmation of his own intuition:

To speak of Saint Clotilde is to evoke the astonishing virtue of a Christian woman in the midst of extreme difficulties and in a time of darkness and savagery.

Saint Clotilde… Saint Radegonde… In the invading barbaric night, these admirable saints kept their lamp burning - the lamp of prayer and good works, spiritual and temporal. They

maintained bastions of prayer, honor and culture against barbarism because their souls were fixed in God. Are we asked to do anything else?

His panegyric of Saint Clotilde, L'Ordre français n° 105, from

July-August 1966 (p. 26-34), earned him "a flood of letters and warm congratulations".

On Sunday, May 23, 1965, he was invited to preach during a pilgrimage to Compiègne organized by a Parisian group to pray for the prisoners. Everywhere he went, the same thought obsessed him: in the crisis situation that the Church militancy is going through, to unite the firmness of faith, the audacity of the

Nmss "mmfsf,l,d,,am/s.N.E.L "20n.pAl-54. "

cmoignage of faith with peace and confidence in God. In December 1964, following a visit he made to several groups of faithful, he expressed his thoughts: My impression of my tour in Cahors and Toulouse: Well, these poor people who do not want to let themselves be taken over by the invasion of the progressive lie and of anarchy do not know enough that the Lord is there. It seems to me that this is what I have to tell them and I would like to persuade them of this. Not to disarm them of course, but to enable them to fight knowing that the Lord is close by

- Itineraries

In this Catholic resistance of the years immediately following the end of the Council, the review Itinéraires played a great

role. Calmel's collaboration with it became all the more intimate. The friendship that united him to some and to others gave him complete freedom to use fraternal correction. To Jean Madiran, who sometimes showed too much optimism towards the Pope, the disciple of Saint Thomas was friendly in pointing out the always possible limits of the successor of Peter. To a chronicler who affirmed in a clumsy way that "Jesus is in prison in the host and penitent", Father Calmel said "gently" his thought, which was that of the traditional theology'^. Generally speaking, he was well aware of his mission with the magazine, which was to raise and maintain the level of the fight against errors: "Of course, one would still like the magazine to be a little more nourishing for the soul. I understand that they are fighting because the encirclement continues. But we must pray and meditate all the more because we are under siege." The meetings, the correspondence, the recollections preached to the Companions gave him the opportunity to encoutaget souls and to teach.

In June 1966, the bishops of France threatened to ban Itinéraires, and the permanent council of bishops issued a warning against the magazine. This measure had the happy effect of increasing the number of subscribers by a thousand, of uniting the militants more and of making them grow in peace. In August 1966, Father Calmel met Jean Madiran. The summary he made of their conversation shows the spirit that united the two men:

32-Letcrcdu 18 December 1964.

33 ■ Letter to a third party of March 2, 1964.

34. Letter of March 2, 1965. about a "good article" of Minimus (Henri Charlicr).

To stand close to the Lord in great love and great trust. To reach the souls we can reach. Not to be troubled by the bad government of the Church. To which we can do nothing. This is the conclusion that I retain from my long and excellent conversation with Madiran

There was indeed, among the contributors to the ^Itineraries, a deep supernatural friendship. Witness this card that Jean Madiran sent from Fontgombault to Father Calmel on his feast day, March 7, 1966, and co-signed by the Abbot, Dom Jean Roy, then Jean Ousset, Louis Salleron, Alexis Cuvers, André Charlier and Admiral Auphan.

- “Priests who want to hold”

Alongside these initiatives by the faithful, many clergymen held high the flag of Catholic Tradition. In May 1966, Father Calmel was invited to a meeting of priests. He wrote;

It is to be expected that the clergy will spoil again and become a little more confused. The day after the Ascension, I have to meet some parish priests (after having preached at one of their houses) who want to hold on. What is certain, it is that Jesus does not cease to reach, support, strengthen souls, in this chaos

Among these isolated and desolate priests, the preaching of Father Calmel sounded like a Sursitm corda: “The parish priests I have seen; they are obsessed with the sight of the universal surrender; obsessed with the spectacle of the surrenders; I would like them to live more in prayer - We are priests and Jesus will not abandon us^*. “

One of them began to make himself known to those who wanted to resist the modernist tide. Born in 1924, Georges de Nantes was ordained for the diocese of Paris in 1951. In October 1956, he inaugurated his Letter to My Friends, which warned against the development of modernism and called the faithful to resistance. This monthly publication soon reached the number of three or four thousand copies, sometimes even eight thousand. Father Calmel appreciated the rigor of the Abbé de Nantes, his eloquence and his audacity. He said himself very happy, by

He said he was very happy, for example, with their very friendly meeting of March 22, 1965, and in particular with finding him “more serene than last June. However, he was surprised to find in him “someone who believes himself called to play a great role, a greater role no doubt than he actually is”. During the following summer, Father Calmel reported:

The more I see the state of the Church, the more I want to remain in the Lord,

|I find that the Abbot of Nantes (whose influence is great) does not say this enough. He runs the risk of making people too tense about the betrayals and apostasy of the clerics and the fathers (only some of them) of the Council. But the personal letters he sends me prove to me that he values very much the appreciation I send him of his mimeographed “letters” (...). May Our Lady make him understand: I pray for this

The two priests met again in July 1966 and again in August. The Dominican spoke frankly to his confrere in the

priesthood;

Tomorrow, I will go to see the abbot of Nantes: if he could resolve to stop shouting to all the echoes (the mimeographed letters… to twelve thousand!) that the Church is badly governed and if he would simply accept to help and comfort a small flock, it seems to me that it would be wiser. But does he see it? Will he see it”?

This convergence of views on essential things and, at the same time, this difference in the art of defending the truth and leading souls helps us to understand the spirit of Father Calmel, the union he tried to achieve and maintain, in himself and in others, between the sometimes fierce testimony of the faith of all times and the mystical union with Christ, with his gentleness and peace.

Another priest, a Benedictine monk, had regular and very fraternal relations with Father Calmel since their first meetings in 1963. The Dominican said how happy he was to receive letters from Dom Gérard Calvet written from Brazil (February 19, 1965, for example), or to have news of him from one of the monks of Fontgombault who was very close to him (November 5, 1965). On January 1, 1966, Father Calmel went to En-Calcat to “find our dear friend Dom Gérard”. This new stay in the famous Benedictine abbey gave him the opportunity to encourage the faithful, in particular the widow of a

captain killed in Algeria. In response to Father Calmel’s support and letters, the Benedictine monk sent him “an admirable translation in verse of the Veni Sancte Spiritus by

André Charlier," and then a souvenir image after the death of his mother, M " *Calvct**,

- Islands of resistance

The initiatives of a few courageous lay people and the fidelity of a few good priests were of great value in the midst of the real chaos that followed the Second Vatican Council. However, it was easy to see their limits. The devil's strategy has always been to sow fear and, to this end, to isolate his victims. It is much more difficult to stand firm in the face of the enemy's onslaught when one lives in solitude. "When two or three are gathered in my name, I am in their midst," I will be there to enlighten, strengthen and comfort them. This promise of Our Lord Jesus Christ is especially true in the days of persecution. In addition to this, the one who remains alone has an influence on the individuals, who may be many, but who remain particular persons. Only a community can have an influence on society, on communities, on the Church, on political society.

Father Calmel understood very early on that the reaction of isolated persons against decadence should lead to the constitution of communities where the treasures of Tradition would be lived in fullness and which would radiate this light on the Church and on the world. On August 4, 1965, the feast of St. Dominic, he turned to the founder and father of the Order of Preachers. After praising his life of prayer, he addressed him:

May he obtain for us the indispensable gift of habitual prayer so that we may be witnesses of Jesus in a world of darkness and perdition and be united with Jesus to contribute to the salvation of souls - and (perhaps) to a small restoration of some islands of Christian civilization before the end of time

Islands of Christian civilization would be the lasting solution to the current crisis. Slowly, this idea was gaining ground. A year later, on the occasion of a preaching in a parish, he wrote: “I am more and more persuaded

that the important thing is to form, as far as we can, small fervent Christian communities”.

In this spirit, Father Calmcl had already encouraged the union of a few faithful Christians in Lorraine under the name of a “Saint John’s community”, which has already been mentioned. But it was above all the Benedictine monasteries and the Dominican congregations that provided him with the first examples of such bastions of Christianity.

The Benedictine Abbey of Fontgombault remained for faithful Catholics a rallying point, an oasis of peace and a source of spiritual life. Father Calmel never lost an opportunity to go there. He spent a fortnight there from the end of October until November 12, 1965. He returned in February 1966 for a long stay during which he was “happy to help the abbot prepare his conferences to the monks on the Church. It was also an opportunity for him to meet Christians who were overwhelmed by the crisis; “Always the same impression of a debacle that is precipitating (not the monks! but it is the testimony of people who come to comfort themselves at home). But the certainty that God will hold us and that we must hold and grow in his love. Here is a very good atmosphere”’*. “For himself, he asked for the grace “to grow in contemplation”.

The Abbey of the Olivetans in Maylis, in the Landes, also tried to maintain the Tradition. Father Calmel, who had spent

a summer month there in 1964, returned in December 1966 to preach a triduum to the monks. On the news of the death of the prior, Dom Fulgence, on December 14 of that year, he wrote: “I feel sorry for them; he was a holy monk who protected them. Let us ask to know more and more, that trials are graces and to sing always. “

However, among these islands of resistance, the Dominican teaching sisters held a special place in the priestly and paternal heart of Father Calmel. For the Order of St. Dominic, at least in its feminine branches, could pride itself on its fidelity to its motto Veritas.

From mid-July until August 4, 1965, the preacher had to rest with the nuns at Le Cayla in the Tarn. He was then able to do the

The Dominican Congregation of the Sisters of Montcils invited him to celebrate Mass and to preach. He was very happy to be able to note their fidelity: “They remain (what luck!) very firm in the true tradition of the Order.

We know the bond that united Father Calmcl to the Dominican Sisters of the Holy Spirit of Pontcallec and to their founder, Father Berro. On each of his visits to Paris, the Dominican did not fail to stop at their house in Saint-Cloud. After climbing Mont-Valérien, he would arrive out of breath,” said one sister. He would go to the chapel and then to his little room. There he could feel “calm again, after the whirlwind of these days”. He would meet with the sisters, preach to them, give them some conferences,” and continue his work. It was also an opportunity for him to receive visits

from his friends or those under his direction, and to stock up on books at a bookstore in rue Bonaparte, in Paris.

A few notes written on the occasion of the Christmas celebrations give an idea of his spiritual life and his preaching in Saint-Cloud at the end of that year 1966:

To know with great gentleness and peace in the midst of our trials and in the madness of this world, that the Word became man and dwells in us, full of grace and truth.

Insist that since the Incarnation, it is the fullness of time. Even the years of apostasy are enclosed in the years of grace (See Theology of History, pp. 51-55).

May Our Lady obtain for us that we may be united to Him more and more and that we may rest in Him. May Our Lady obtain for Christians and for every soul of good will not to let themselves be led astray by the seductive power of the anti-society invented by Satan's minions.

Insist also on the peace and security that come from love. Through love, Jesus dwells in us with a fulfilling and sanctifying presence.

Hence, an impregnable safeguard. Not only to adhere to him by faith, to be assured in him by hope, but to remain in him by love: hence rest, strength, peace.

The situation that Father Caimel had been in since 1955 prevented him from having public relations with the Dominican Sisters of the Holy Name of Jesus. Nevertheless, the authorities tolerated that some sisters met him from time to time. This was the occasion for Father to enlighten them about the

Sorèze

This was an opportunity for the Father to enlighten them on the situation of the Church and the world, to encourage them to be faithful, to exhort them to Dominican sanctity. This is how he received the visit of Mother Marie-François Dupouy and Mother Anne-Marie Simoulin, on March 11, 1965, at the home of the Vernette family in Toulouse, and then, the next day, another sister at Dourgne. During his vacations in Cayla (summer 1965), it was the turn of the mother Raymond-Marie Berthomme, as well as of the mother Hélène. In March 1966, he was in En-Calcat. He had the joy of meeting two Dominican teachers, “two daughters of Mother Hélène,” returning from Lourdes with their students. On July 4, 1966, Mother Helene was able to take him to the monastery of Azérables, in the Creuse. For the feast of St. Dominic, on August 4, 1966, two sisters came to fill the void of his solitude on this great day. And in September of the same year, he met three prioresses at a friend’s house in Agen. “They are courageous,” he wrote at the time, “but their task is difficult with the present school legislation. “

It was not much, certainly, but it allowed the Dominican to follow the progress of this congregation to which he had once been so closely linked. Above all, he told them, you must keep the flame of your consecration to God burning brightly. During the Easter Vigil of 1965, “most of the houses of the Congregation of Mother Helene will consecrate themselves to the Blessed Virgin: this seems to me to be urgent - and also a great reason (and in fact the only one) to have confidence”. And, with regard to the Mother General, he wrote clearly: “If the congregation for which she is responsible is such as to lead the sisters to holiness, the Lord will keep it, if not useless”.

Would Providence allow him to exert a wider and more effective influence on the whole congregation, as in the beautiful years 1948-1953? He hoped so with all his heart and prayed for it, with the freedom of spirit that we know:

That January 21, 1966, I begin with Mother Hélène and Sister Marie-Luc a novena to “Blessed Pius XII”; three Hail Marys, three times “Blessed Pius XII, pray for us”, so that, if it pleases God, my situation may be enlarged on the side of the sisters and in all respects

In the meantime, other fields of apostolate offered themselves to the preacher’s zeal.

To the rescue of souls

First of all, it was necessary to encourage, educate, and lead on the paths of union with God the many souls who entrusted themselves to him. For the great vcritcs taught by the Catholic Tradition cannot remain just beautiful thoughts. They must come to life and be applied to the particular circumstances of each person. That is why, in the very special circumstances of the present crisis, Father Calmel intensified his ministry of spiritual direction.

Above all, the priest must teach souls to pray. This requires in each of them a loyal renunciation of themselves. To this end, the Dominican did not hesitate to advise some to read St. John of the Cross: “He can help you to detachment, to peace, to renounce peacefully that Jesus does not make himself felt; as it pleases him, and not as it pleases us: I find very beautiful thoughts in the commentary of the Canticle. (…) May St. John of the Cross enlighten and delight you.” By

this he meant to teach souls to live in the present moment and to be light of heart: “One day at a time. May your soul remain light and singing.

Through detachment from oneself and through simplicity, it was the union of love with God that he was trying to achieve: “I am happy that Saint John of the Cross is speaking to you; he is the great doctor of love, of purified love. “A beautiful letter of Father Calmel on St. Joseph sums up very well the care he gave to recollection and prayer, which constituted the goal of his direction. i One of the traits of the life of St. Joseph to which it is usual to draw attention is his silence, his contemplation, his recollection.

(…) This silence proceeds from an incredibly deep agreement between the heart of St. Joseph and I heart of God; the will of Joseph and the will of God. Moreover, this habit of recollection and silence is certainly strengthened by the example of the Virgin, who collected and meditated in her heart all the manifestations of the Lord.

We would like to give you an idea of the radiance of Perco Calmel in those years 1964-1967. After the death of her husband, M~ F. wrote: “I let you know by telephone the sad news of my husband’s death. (…) My husband

and always hoped for a goodbye. U was telling me about Mr. your father, whose courage you were praising

59 - Letter of February 21, 1964. “I pray well for you, that you may be singing, light and blessing” (letter of December 14, 1966).

mystery of her Son, the Incarnate Word; the Virgin Mary will have learned much from Saint Joseph.

(…) May St. Joseph, husband of the Mother of God, foster father of the Son of God, guardian of the Virgin and head of the Holy Family, may St. Joseph, model of contemplatives, obtain for us a grace of silence; the silence where God dwells, where the blade never ceases to be nourished by God and consoled by Him™.

The father of souls wanted this spiritual doctrine to be incarnated in each person in a practical and personal way, adapted to the very particular circumstances of this century in full upheaval. From this life of prayer, he expected a fruit proper to times of crisis, the courageous witness of faith, on the one hand, and on the other, the intimate alliance of strength and peace in the heart of the Christian. The following passages, gleaned from his correspondence, are particularly illuminating:

A soul is at peace if through all this (persecutions), which is necessary for the purification of love, it is stabilized in love*’. Prayer to be said at all times: Lord Jesus, deign to take me close enough to you so that I may hold on, do your work, remain merciful and courageous. I trust in you”.

I bless Our Lord who gives you his peace: remain there, all small and singing. For the thousand occasions of worry or impatience that might keep you from the peace of Jesus Christ, invoke Our Lady of Good Counsel, or the Most Prudent Virgin (and St. Joseph). They will help you™.

The future is dark; humanly speaking, we cannot see any light; but let us live in the darkness of the present while remaining in the light and peace of Jesus. I see only this. We

should do this, even if we see the light coming. All the more so if we donâ€™t see any.

This elevation did not prevent him from having a very practical sense of earthly realities. In his letters, we see him watching over the sleep, rest, vacations, food and health of his sons or daughters. He often preaches patience and tolerance of the faults of others, courtesy and good

mood. When it came to politics, he was very discreet, giving his opinion to those closest to him, but never imposing a position.

Dominican preaching

The apostolate in a chosen environment, among friends and souls of good will, is easy, one might say, pleasant and reassuring. The temptation is strong, in fact, in stormy weather, to shut oneself up at home while waiting for a lull. It was also a temptation, in view of the turmoil that fell upon the Church at the time of the Second Vatican Council, to meet among "right-thinking" people, to keep warm in a closed and "safe" environment while passively hoping for better days.

Such an attitude would not have been priestly and even less Dominican. That is why, at the same time that he encouraged and strengthened the faithful and the priests who saw clearly the misfortunes of the times, Father Calmel continued his preaching wherever Providence led him. He had well perceived the duc in altum (fishing on the high seas) of the Gospel, do not forget the lost sheep. After noting the very bad state of his Order and of the Church, and "the unconsciousness and betrayal of priests who are to be mourned", while expecting "divine chastisements". he concluded; "In the meantime, I watch, I pray, I continue according to my strength to give light. "

- Oral preaching

Without ever getting tired, the preacher announced the good word wherever he was invited. To follow him in his apostolic journeys helps to grasp the breadth of his heart as an apostle.

At the very beginning of 1965, he reached a rural public: he evangelized a country parish all demoralized by a shady hotel, frequented from thirty kilometers around. Venus, Mercury and Belphegor: the three false gods, or the three demons of the modern world: impurity (eroticism) - money (egoism) - finally

universal fraud. “(Lccirc of December 5, 1965)

the confusion and darkness which make people call good evil and evil good, this is the situation in which we must give witness to our beloved Savior, But his grace is enough.”

For Holy Week in 1965, he preached in the parish of Poujol, in the Hérault, whose parish priest had the courage to fight openly against Islam. In September, he preached in the cathedral of Agen, invited by his former German teacher, who had become the parish priest of the cathedral. Then he accompanied pilgrims to Lourdes before going to Castres (October 1965) to give three days of preaching. In November of the same year, he was near Chartres where he spoke to seventy rural leaders (national rural instructors of domestic education) about the education of the young girl in the modern world. This gives him the joy of discovering the great architectural marvel that is the Gothic cathedral. From her artist’s heart escapes a song of admiration:

Walk in the light. I am still amazed by the cathedral of Chartres; through whatever portal you enter, your eyes immediately encounter a light that is not of this world; you advance, and as you advance, your sight rests on stained glass windows of a celestial sweetness, of a coloring never similar, never hard, never strained… I found the portals of the cathedral of Chartres incomparable with their characters of such an intense spiritual expression; they are children of God led by the Spirit of God. But what enchanted me the most was the interior, the light of the stained glass windows inseparable from the architecture. Outside, the wind was blowing like a storm; an icy wind; I could not stop long enough to drink in the spirituality of the portals.

On the back of a postcard sent by a pilgrim, Father notes these words: “When the little children go to Chartres with their father, we say to ourselves that Christianity continues and we carry the daily cross with lightness. “

For the feasts of the Ascension and Pentecost 1966, Father Calmel preached in parishes. The following July, he led a retreat for the nuns of the Monastère des Vents, in Azérables, in the Creuse. Unfortunately, he had to note: “Here, many of the sisters were infantile. Some were older. Some are taken by Jesus. It is certain that one cannot

to risk sending sisters to such congregations, but we must help those who are there® “.

From September 3 to 12, he was with Father N., pastor of Ussel near Tulle, for a parish novena. The parish priest was a good man, certainly, with a solid faith, but “the Latin services were conducted so casually that it was a pity. “The preacher does his best to touch souls. And indeed, the results are quite positive: “I reached a few souls in the confessional more than I would have thought, seeing how few people came to the instructions. Here as everywhere, the young people being taken up to 16 years of age or more in the secular schools, and not being helped by their families, have very little faith and very little piety. As for the adults, there is a great deal of carelessness, a fundamental indifference.” This direct contact with the mediocrity of the faith and morals of many strengthened the preacher’s conviction that the solution would not consist in compromises and middle ways, but in the constitution of islands or bastions of authentic Christian life.

On September 17, 1966, the preacher was again in Lourdes where he exhorted the pilgrims to “take refuge in the perfect prayer of the Coredemptrix Virgin. Then, from October 28 to November 2, he preached in Agen for Christ the King Sunday and for All Saints’ Day. He stayed with his former teacher, Archpriest of the cathedral, Bishop Pouzet.

These multiple contacts with souls represent an important dimension of Father Calmel’s apostolate. His correspondence

records his conversations with a farmer or a young teacher during a long train journey or on a “hitchhiking” trip. One day, he recounted, he would not let go of the driver, a young man, until he had agreed “that Jesus is not only a superior man, as he quietly asserted, that practicing a humanitarian morality is not enough, that all religions are not equal; no. God loved men to the point that he was able to give them the best of himself. God loved men to the point of giving them his Son, this Son of God died to repair the horrible reality of sin, Satan still seeks to lose us for 1 eternity. “These were three truths he had to admit.

The universality of his preaching is exemplary, as well as his facility to adapt to his listeners. In order to realize this, it is appropriate to note his preaching, in these years of the end or the immediate aftermath of the Vatican 11 Council, at the Carmelite convent of Virton, which he was particularly fond of.

He was then living in this same house for health reasons. We spoke, we understood each other, and, on her return to the carmel, the nun praised the qualities of the Dominican father to her prioress who invited him to visit them. The first meeting took place in December 1965. He was immediately struck by the good spirit that reigned in the Carmel and received great spiritual favors. On his return, from the Tournay train station, he wrote: “May the grace of peace and charity received at the Carmel deepen in me™. “He returned there for three days of preaching from June 22 to 24, 1966, and again from December 29 to 31 of the same year. Father Calmel’s testimony says much about the contemplative life of this convent and about his own grace.

What I am even more sure of after my third preaching in the Carmel is that, even in our apostate and corrupt world, Jesus is truly loved. I have met souls of an uncommon

transparency, absence of illusion, and simplicity: souls in whom Jesus dwells freely. Their renunciation, which is of great depth, of great realism, has nothing forced or stiff; this renunciation proceeds much less from a sense of dignity, of dress, of decency, than from a marvelous love. Jesus is alive in these souls and everything follows from there. (These souls have passed under the regime of gifts, as the mystical authors say.)

It is true that one does not often meet souls taken by God in depth and truth; but it is even more true that such souls exist and that there will always be some. Until the end of the centuries, there will be souls in the world who imitate Martha and Mary or the Apostle John.

And, a few days later, he added:

I desire very much that this heavenly vision of the Carmel not leave me:

- Written preaching

As beautiful and intense as the apostolate of the parish was for Father Calmel, the natural and supernatural gifts he had received and cultivated propelled him in a privileged way towards preaching through the pen. There he fulfilled his role as a theologian and could reach a wider audience. One finds in his articles in the review Itinéraires and in his works during this period what was at the heart of his interior life: an increased concern to develop in himself and in others the contemplative life, whether it is manifested in silent prayer, in liturgical worship or in the witness of faith.

In November 1965, as the Vatican Council 11 was coming to a close in Rome, the preacher proposed to the readers of Itinéraires a long “Note on the Primacy of Contemplation in the Christian Regime” in which he took up and deepened the theme already addressed in numbers 76 (September-October 1963) and 90 (February 1965) of the magazine.

With the help of long quotations from St. Thomas Aquinas, he shows the essential difference between contemplation and action in the natural order and those in the Christian order, that is, in the man enlightened by revealed truths and animated by charity. In the Christian order, contemplation is “by love and for love” (p. 153). It is moreover this reign of charity, the soul of all the virtues, which assures the link between the contemplative life and the active life, which “cannot remain foreign to contemplation”, To love his brother with the sentiments of Christ, the Christian must unite himself to God in prayer. To love his brother with the sentiments of Christ, the Christian must unite himself to God in prayer. From then on, “the life of the Christian remains an active life, but it is accomplished in an atmosphere of contemplation. “(p. 159) But if we look at things in a practical way, it is clear that these links between the contemplative and the active life must be protected by public life. “The city must be placed under the sign of contemplation, have a contemplative inspiration. “The author gives here I example of the private property and the intermediate bodies by showing their link with the life of the spirit. The primacy of the contemplation reaches the political and social life.

One of the prineipal nourishments of prayer being liturgical prayer, Father Calmel published in December 1965, in the logical continuation of his “Note on the primacy of contemplation”, a long meditation on the Panÿ lingua of Saint Thomas.

7297. November 1965. p. 148 to 167.

73 - “Pdnge lingua ^briosi corpans myiterium y>. Umératres n’ 98, December 1965, p. 232-252.

unprepared reader. However, in order to put the love of God for mankind in a bad light, one cannot avoid a well-constructed exposition and defense of the dogma, so attacked today, of transubstantiation. It is necessary to return to the principle: the real presence “is ordered first of all to realize the holy sacrifice (...), the unique and definitive sacrifice of the Cross” (p. 250). We find here the principal preoccupation of Father Calmel: to nourish souls, to lead them to contemplation by a doctrinal and tasty preaching.

How can the faithful Catholic of the 21st century maintain this level of spiritual life when he is the object of mockery or persecution, when he must give open witness to the revealed truth in the face of a hostile world? The life of prayer which animates all behavior must in fact be lived today in very particular circumstances. This is the object of the meditation that Father Calmel proposes to the readers of ‘Itineraries’ in March 1966 : To unite doctrinal firmness with evangelical gentleness, to inspire the most audacious initiatives by self-forgetfulness, to make the fierce resistance against modernism the occasion for a more ardent love of God and souls, such will be the fruit of the contemplative study of doctrine and prayer. We cannot doubt for a moment that the Lord is asking us to persevere in our resistance to neo-modernism. (...) Resistance is necessary as is perseverance in the faith. (...)

Now, at the same time that he calls us to bear witness to the truth, the Lord asks us, and in a way begs us, to grow in love and in prayer. For it is obvious that the Lord wants to give himself to our soul more and more. (…) Well, this ever purer welcome of the Lord who gives himself is more important than your resistance to the maneuvers of progressivism; it must not be separated from this resistance, but it must dominate it, penetrate it with gentleness, maintain it in peace, the spirit of struggle will not be enervated, the ardor will not be dulled, the opposition will remain fierce, but it is no longer in a suffocating atmosphere that we will continue the fight: the sweet peace of the athletes of faith will become our share.

Moreover, in this area even more than in others, the Christian is helped by his guardian angel. This one stands before God, uniting in a sublime way the highest contemplative life and the most effective active life, and his mission is to lead and maintain his protégé in this balance. Strengthened by this conviction, Father Calmel gives a beautiful reminder of the existence and the role of

11966 , p. 24 and SV.

In the form of a dialogue with a “parishioner”, he reminds us of the existence and the life of these “persons created free and responsible” (p. 161). to whom God has entrusted us. The angel is “a friendly person, an instrument perfectly adapted to divine causality” (p. 165).

After these elevations on the supernatural life, Father Calmel returns to more controversial subjects. Two dogmas particularly targeted by the novelties of the Vatican II

Council hold the attention of the theologian, that of the mystery of the Church and that of original sin.

In November 1966, he took up again the important question of the inseparable union in the Church between the elements that make it a visible institution and the life of grace and charity that constitutes its soul - the union between what makes the Church a “body” and what makes it “mystical. According to the times and according to the truths denied or forgotten by men, the theologian will have to underline this or that point of view of the Church. Today, the temptation is to “make the Church disappear in a changing world” (p. 151), and to deny the essential distinction between the Church and the world. It is therefore necessary to remind Christians of the social character of the Church. However, the theologian can never hide the mysterious and invisible grace, “that charity without which there would be no more Church than there is without a living body soul” (p. 141). “You shall not separate what God has united” remains the basic thought of Father Calmel. However, with a very Thomistic precaution, he takes care to recall that these expressions of body and soul of the Church are only analogical expressions. While retaining the fragility of a comparison, they nevertheless carry and translate a reality. It is because they have forgotten the meaning of analogy that many theologians have gone astray,

The more or less explicit denial of original sin and its transmission also constitutes one of the most serious errors of the thinkers of our time”. This is why the disciple of St. Thomas Aquinas wanted to preach loud and clear this fundamental dogma of theology and Christian life. He did so in a very long article published in the December 1966 issue of the

75 - “Nos anges gardiens 103, May 1996, p. léOctsv.

76- “A definition of the Church by Cardinal Joumctw./f/nAa/rrjn*’ 107, November 1966.

77 ‘ Father Calmel had already expressed himself on this subject in the review La France catholique. Following this

(??) of the famous Jesuit Father (more or less rightly famous) Daniélou - following his letter to the Catholic France against the unbearable articles of the said Daniélou on original sin. I would like to reply to him with a letter that will be useful to him” (letter of Father Calmel of August 12, 1966). This episode shows how much Father Calmel’s texts were read by a large public.

The theological rigor and depth of this study are particularly remarkable. The author is well aware that he is lying at the heart of modern thought, for an error about original sin leads to a radical distortion of the redemptive work and of all religion (p. 138). U also responds, by the same token, to the fables of Teilhard and of evolutionism.

Alongside Father Calmel’s publications in the review Itinéraires during this period, one work deserves special mention, insofar as it can be seen as his contribution to and response to the “spirit of the Council” that was blowing in from all sides.

Theology of 1 ‘ History

Reading the publications about the Council and seeing the euphoria of new things in the Church and in civil society, Father Calmel understood the urgent need to return to simple and essential truths.

As early as May 1964, he wrote a short article on the "Theology of History" about the duration and the end of the world. "For the elect", says Our Lord himself, propter electos, the cataclysms and persecutions of the end of time will be shortened.

In August 1965, he took advantage of his stay in a quiet place to bring forward, he said, "this book that was going around in my head about Christ the master of History. U already envisages it as "a rather strong response to this myth of progress (and upheaval) which poisons souls", and he intends to insist on "the theme of the victory of the Crobt*". As he wrote, he could see the limits of his study, "but finally," he said, "these meditations can immunize against progressivism and help souls to adhere to God in Our Lord*. As was his custom, he took advantage of every opportunity to preach on the mystery on which he intended to write, in order to deepen his thought and clarify his expression, as he did at Fontgombault, for example, on November 5, 1965. Then, with part of it written, he would send the manuscript to the Dominican Sisters of Toulon for them to type it up and add

79 ■ Itinéraires n® 83, May 1964.

c sin 108. December 1966, p.]

their suggestions, send it to M"' Yvette Evrard for correction, This one returned the whole to the author for a last rereading.

The publication of this book was not without its problems. In accordance with ecclesiastical laws and out of loyalty to his superiors, Father Calmel always entrusted his writings to the censorship of his Order. However, the work in question was not at all up to date! While a first censor had approved this Theology of History, a second refused it. Embarrassed, the provincial of Toulouse appealed to a third censor. The author comments:

It's all fun. If the Lord wants this book, he will provide for it. Of course I want it to be published, but I want even more that - whatever it may be - I give everything to the Lord in great peace. (...) This is a very great and indispensable grace for one to be able to resist, to continue the struggle, to endure isolation and to remain serene and joyful at the same time.

In spite of his recourse to the general master *' and to his benefactors of the Sky the fart Calmel wiped a refusal. To a correspondent, he confided: "You will be sorry, but not surprised, if I tell you that my book, in the end, and despite the praise of the first censor, is stopped and refused. "He was not discouraged and accepted Jean Madiran's invitation to publish his work in the form of articles in Itinéraires. In the end, a special issue of the magazine was published in September-October 1966. "It's not the same" as the

publication of a book, but all the same, he was delighted with this solution. Six thousand copies of this special issue were printed and it was soon translated into Italian.

The Theology of History was published in October 1984 by the Dominican Sisters of the Holy Name of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart (Brignoles), who introduced the modifications made by the author himself to the 1966 text.

The preface letter of Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre notes the theological depth of the author's thought:

In all his works, Father Calmel tried, like his Master, the Angel of the School, St. Thomas Aquinas, to seek the causes of

82 - Letter of January 14, 1966.

84 - On the occasion of the anniversary of Father Perret's death, he confided this intention to him (letter of February 17, 1966).

85 ' Itinéraires No. 106, September-October 1966, pp. 15-180. "Theology of History.

86 - A summary of the book can be found in the Rn of this biography: see Appendix 6, page 625.

deep, the ultimate reasons altissimas causas, from where the extraordinary and definitive interest of its works…

One cannot help but notice in reading him the action of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, of wisdom, of intelligence which make him judge everything in rationibus æternis according to eternal principles, divine principles, which illuminate with a singular light the subjects which he treats as a man of God, as a priest, as a theologian.

This is what he achieves in this study on the Theology of History, which should be in the hands of all teachers and students of the final year of high school. But more than that, all those who wish to know "true history" will find in these pages a deep edification and a great satisfaction.

According to his habit, the author always keeps in mind his reader and the people to whom the work is dedicated. He anticipates their objections and answers them. This explains his lively style, the use of personal pronouns, parentheses and parentheses of parentheses, digressions and unexpected notes.

Because he is a priest of Jesus Christ, he wants to help Christians who understand "not without anguish" the present meaning of St. Paul's words: "The mystery of iniquity is at work even now. "For there is great danger of "losing one's footing, of being overcome by the sight of the universally invading powers of apostasy" which "have penetrated even into the bosom of the Church of God. "

As he had already done in his previous publications, he finds in the book of Revelation the key to history and the unshakeable certainty of victory. In this light, the myth of evolution disappears like snow in the sun.

Let us note that Father Calmel's severe criticism of progressivism and of the novelties which, already in 1966, were ravaging the Lord's vineyard, was very well combined with a great desire for the purification and renewal of the men of the Church. That is why he defends those "ardent and generous people" whose "young vigor" is broken by certain defenders of tradition, but "lazy" or profiteers. These daring sons of the Church then come to "think that life and originality, gushing and risk, are incompatible with wise customs and sound doctrine" and are in danger of becoming

discouraged or rebelling (p. 74). Is this long page not an apology for the spirit of Mother Hélène, to whom the book is dedicated, and of her sisters who, in 1953, carried out the audacious reform of their congregation?

into action. It is a tradition, not a revolution, but an enterprising tradition. “In order to accomplish a renewal worthy of the name, it is imperative that people make the inheritance that has been handed down bear fruit, with their most lively and personal forces. Otherwise, of course, renewal does not take place, it is sclerosis. In the presence of this inertia, the companies of upheaval will have the beautiful part. “(p. 73) The authentic progress is “the novelty in the participation to what was given once for all” (p. 75).

Theology of History sounds like a call to arms and initiatives, leaving no room for fatalism or discouragement. It is traversed by an impulse of love and victory. The evil that God allows will always serve his glory, it will be the place of a deeper faith, of a more pure love, of a more heroic holiness, prayer and witness.

A fragile health

One is surprised by the strength of these meditations on the history of the Church and on the present crisis, when one remembers the author’s poor health, which remained alarming. In March 1966, he had to undergo medical examinations. After a thousand examinations,” he wrote, “the heart shows a certain stabilization; for ten years there has been no aggravation; there is no immediate danger: do not force it (of course) and I am watching over it. “However, he still suffers from nosebleeds that are an enigma for the specialists, and, intermittently, he still suffers from cardiac

malaise, “ordinary in my case” he adds to reassure a correspondent.

In spite of his very busy ministry, the Dominican manages to find periods of rest, which are not always “restful”. In June of 2006,

These repeated breaks improved Father Calmel’s health slightly, but could not prevent his relapses. Thus, he had to return to the hospital on September 30, 1966.

Calmel was not inclined to complain, and the alarming situation of the Church did not give him any respite. In those years immediately following the Council, which were the scene of a sometimes heroic reaction among the faithful and among some priests, he knew very well what Providence expected of him. He had to fulfill his mission as a preacher brother without wavering, distributing the light of theological sapses widely to souls, while exhorting them to a deep and ardent union with God.

20

The vicariate of Prouilhe

At the end of his stay in the convent of Biarritz, in 1963, Father Calmel was approached for the vicariate of Prouilhe. This decision of the Father Provincial, which placed him in the cradle of the Order, at a short distance from Carcassonne and even from Toulouse, had greatly pleased the son of Saint Dominic*’, However, Providence had led him by other paths and, obviously, had wanted to teach him detachment. This is how he was appointed to Sorèze.

A few years later, in February 1966, the “royal school” was reorganized, keeping only the Dominican fathers who taught. In those troubled years, the superiors were at a loss to find a place for the fierce defender of Tradition that Father Calmel was. They don’t know where to put me,” he wrote, “all our convents are upside down or too noisy; and since they cannot assign me to a chaplaincy (where I would necessarily be immobilized…) I think they will resign themselves to Prouilhe. Not to be a chaplain (…) but to continue to write and radiate *. “Father Calmel’s situation was becoming more and more precarious. During 1966, the threats of the bishops of France against the review Itinéraires had increased the turmoil and suspicion. Nevertheless, the chaos that reigned in the clergy and in the Dominican order worked in favor of the witness of faith: “In the state of anarchy of our province, it is not likely that I will be the object of

I October 22, 1963.

of a measure of rigor (…). The most likely thing is that they will tolerate that I continue and that in the province everything will go more and more bump in the road. “However, Father Calmel’s patience was once again tested. At the beginning of July, he was promised Prouilhe for “the course of the summer*’”. In September, she was assured that “Prouilhe will be soon. ” At the end of the same month, he thinks he can write: “I hope that Prouilhe is for bieniot As soon as the provincial will have finished his vacations “

We can guess how much these times and setbacks must have tested the tcligieiu. His correspondence makes this

clear: “Jesus wants me to be patient. Prouilhe is sure, but still a month and a half more or less**. “I am patient for Prouilhe who will be after the 5th, without over-helping, I hope. May Our Lady help me to be patient. But if it pleases her, may she place me there quickly. I also ask this of the holy fathers I have known: It Father Perret and others’*. “Because of a change that interferes, Prouie is postponed to early 1967. Well, patience and God be praised. “God obviously wanted to increase in him the virtues of patience and trust. He governed events in order to purify the soul of his servant and to prepare him for new battles. For this is what Father Calmel desired with all his heart, to be able to serve God in the tragic circumstances in which he was given to live. What he summarized then with a beautiful expression; “That I might do, as a true son of Saint Dominic - and by becoming a little child - a doctor’s work* *. “

Finally, the vigil of the feast of the Epiphany brought him the long awaited news. He was to go to Prouilhe on Thursday, January 12. He then remembered Pope Pius XII whom he had invoked in this affair: “It was on January 8, 1953 that I had seen Pius XII and had spoken to him. He surely remembers me**. “

91-Leitrcdul9juillcrl96”.

92-Lcttrcdu4ii.illci 1966.

93 - Lcrrrc of 30 September 1966.

94-Lcttrc of 12 October 1966.

95-Letter of November 2, 1966.

97 - Letter of January 5, 1967.

The vicariate of Prouilhe

the steps of St. Dominic

- The cradle of the Order

It was in 1207 that St. Dominic inaugurated the “Holy Preaching of Prouilhe”. In response to the request of seven former Cathar converts, the Spanish preacher founded a monastery of contemplative nuns who would be united to the preaching against heresy through prayer and penance. This initiative reveals well the soul of St. Dominic: everything had to begin with contemplation and end with it. With a single glance, the holy founder embraced the preaching ministry of the priests and the silent prayer of the sisters. From there, as from a home port, Dominic and his first companions spread out to Castelnaudary, Pamiers, Carcassonne and the surrounding area. They prayed, studied, recharged their batteries at Prouilhe, taught the cloistered sisters the ways of contemplation, and then devoted themselves to the ministry of itinerant preaching. “It is here that St. Dominic became a saint,” wrote Father Calmel upon his arrival, expressing his joy at having been named to the very cradle of the Order of Friars Preachers

- The vicariate

The chaplaincy of the monastery is called the vicariate. There, Father Calmel finally found “particularly suitable conditions for prayer and study”, and a great peace. Above all, he could take part in the liturgical services of the monastery. He exclaimed: “I can’t believe that I have services sung in Gregorian. What a favor: I had been unaware of this since 1955 (practically) - except for the brief stops at Fontgombault.

The prior of the vicariate was a very original character. Father Rzewuski was born on March 12, 1893 to a noble Polish family. After having tasted worldly life and having devoted himself to art, “my prince”, as Fr. Calmel humorously called him, entered the Dominican Order in Saint-Maxim in order to find “religious life and contemplative life in a great order, with God”. He was ordained in 1932 and lived in Fribourg, Switzerland, from 1933 to 1935.

98-Lcctrc of January 16, 1967.

101-Letter dated May 7, 1967.

102 - Father Rzcwusky, Through the invisible crystal, p. 454.

1946, was named master of novices at Saint-Maximin (1946-1955) before taking charge of the monastery of Prouilhe.

Father Rzewuski had kept from his past some original ways, to say the least. Calmel describes them with amusement: “a personal driver, a personal cook in the morning for his personal morning coffee and other stories of a great Russian Polish bourgeois, who entered the Order of St. Dominic in his own way! and who makes some of the fathers of the house (I am one of these fathers) benefit from these customs. However, in spite of the enormous differences in their habits and manners, the two Dominicans got along very well.

The third member of the community was a sixty-year-old German Father, “very good, very approachable,” Father Behler.

- The contemplatives

From now on, it was through the nuns of Prouilhe that Father Calmel could follow the evolution of his Order. This place of observation was all the more interesting since these fifty-two sisters represented the rather conservative and observant part of the Dominican Order.

The first observation he made was that of their lack of fervor. Taking advantage of their proximity to Toulouse, the sisters invited many fathers to give them conferences, at the expense of recollection and prayer. “Among these contemplatives, “there are holy souls”, but all the same, the Lord “is not much loved, even among the nuns”. In short. “I don’t think that the community as such, except for a few admirable sisters, is ablaze with love for God, nor is it aware of the gravity of the hour.” If God allows such decadence in the Church and in the faithful, it is to develop holiness in souls, especially in the consecrated. Some of them understood this very well. One day, one of them explained to Father Calmel that the place of the contemplatives, in the turmoil, was “to develop sanctity in souls, especially among the consecrated.

“The only thing we have to do is to look at Jesus and persevere in this contemplation of love all our lives.

At the request of the Mother Subprioress, Father Calmel agreed to give some talks to the community. He would thus speak about prayer’™. These talks allowed the preacher to better understand the nuns’ vocation and to do them some good.

Unfortunately, Father Calmel had to witness the progressive slide of the monastery. In January 1968, he regretted that

“the cloistered women, without being neo-modernists (the poor…) do not oppose a lot of things which, sooner or later, will make their cloistered life crack”. The demands of some innovative people inside and the influences from outside made the community drift towards the new. The chaplains - “good chaplains by the way, pious but unreal” - had no influence, having as their only rule “to please them”. The authorities followed or even accelerated the movement, without understanding the reticence and the warnings of the conservative fathers “h

What followed was unavoidable. Lacking guidance and real authority, the nuns followed in the footsteps of Kaggiomamento. On March 21, 1968, on his return from a long apostolic journey, Father Calmel wrote his impressions of the evolution of the monastery. During his absence, the Latin liturgy had been given a new “boost” by reading the capitulars of the office in French. “Not bad”, certainly, but why these innovations “if not to prepare the recitation in French of the psalter itself? “Everything will eventually blow up. “

Above all, the lightness and carelessness of the sisters shocked Father Calmel. “They play with the liturgy they have been given to guard, just as the fathers play with their divine powers to celebrate Mass or preach the Gospel. “What a disappointment for the priest of

107 -Letter of September 2, 1967.

(]U he does not want to cimiivcr. Perfect. ” (Letter of 1” February 1968)

Jesus Christ; “There are holy souls among these nuns, but the monastery as such does not respect itself enough (…) for me to have confidence (…) I would have thought that in the turmoil, at least the monastery of Prouilhe would not have let itself be carried away. I trusted too much. How can you take seriously those who take their divine mission so little seriously?” Especially since the nuns did not stop at this childish thoughtlessness. Gradually, they took on a much greater role in the liturgy. In order not to get into trouble, the chaplain allowed this to happen, but in defiance of his priestly powers. Father Calmel was indignant: “In Father Behler’s way of doing things, the rights of the priesthood no longer make sense: he already lets the nuns improvise themselves (without even taking care to see beforehand) the ‘universal prayer’. He would let them do the homily, I fear, since this is already done elsewhere. The priest is dispossessed of his right. The monastery of these sisters” who have preferred “updates” to prayer, the assembly of these misguided contemplatives, would impose on the priest (if the priest allows himself to do so) a liturgy of his own invention in which the priest only has to answer Amen. (…) This usurpation will be cursed. “For Father Calmel, there is no doubt: “I will defend the rights of the priesthood and the rights of the liturgy. The Lord will support me. “

The question was becoming more and more acute. How should he react to such abandonment? On April 10, Father Calmel prayed to his father St. Dominic: “May St. Dominic enlighten me as to what I can do for my Order - if I have anything special to do besides what I am doing - because the decadence is becoming frightful. Courage and peace “h ” The perplexity of the religious would be even greater when the General Chapter of the Order in River Forest (Chicago) ordered new constitutions that led the Order of St. Dominic in the direction of democracy and the “theology of communion”.

The first response, by far the most important, was that of a greater and more effective desire for holiness. In the presence of the first signs of a universal upheaval, the memory of the soldiers of the great war imposed itself irresistibly on him. What the heroes did for the earthly homeland, we must do today to save the heavenly homeland. In a conference to the nuns of Prouilhe, he summarized his thought:

We must not forget the heroes of the other war.

Heroism (I mean the heroism of the warrior, of the soldier), sanctity: these are two greatnesses; but without conmiune measure, although they call each other.

In October of that same year, Father Calmel had the joy of making a pilgrimage to Domremy. The grace of that day is reflected in these lines:

The great interest of the pilgrimage to Leanne la Pucelle will have been to allow me to better situate myself in relation to these two greatnesses and to aspire much more to the heroism of grace - to holiness. May I give a taste of it to many souls, since the Lord wanted to make me his priest.

A desire for madness

Those who lived through the years 1966-1970 remember. It was a real wind of madness that was blowing through the Church. How did it appear to Father Calmel? As a tear, every day a little wider, between Tradition and progressivism, between the witnesses of the faith and the ministers of the world. Yes, the Church is divided,” he wrote in February 1967, “as it was when there were two popes, and even more so than in those distant times.

It is in the clergy that this hideous rupture first appears.

The external appearance of the Church is pitiful: “How pitiful are our parishes in France. Ornaments and sacred vessels are abandoned and the few

to put pressure on souls and to make them embrace the modernism that is dehumanizing the Church. As for the preaching, it was more and more in line with the taste of the day, “repeating what is published everywhere. What a decrease in faith what little love”.

When he went to G.ignol in January 1969, he had the pain of seeing that his beloved home parish was in the worst shape: “The parish here is at least as desolate as yours, with this Dutch priest and his wife: for all the raondt considers him married. “

The priest of Jesus Christ sees these abandonments not only in the newspapers, but in the souls, in the poor victims, whose story, each time, arouses his indignation. Father Calmel calls a correspondent to prayer There will be one day, for sure, a renewal of the clergy - after what punishments! For the time being, many priests are losing themselves and their souls by their impiety, their hypocrisy and their lust. Because Domine ’”…

- The Bishops of France

Such a state of the clergy called for firm measures and a decisive return to the priestly sanctity of old. But instead of using their authority as they should have, the bishops encouraged or protected the most daring innovators.

In response to a strong statement by the Prefect of the Holy Office defending the long-standing faith in the divinity of Christ, the bishops of France made a soothing declaration:

The response of the bishops to Cardinal Ottaviani is pitiful. They imply that in order to express to the modern world the truths of faith defined, it is necessary to give another meaning to the terms of person, natures and others. This would be to change religion. They are obviously being maneuvered. Staying in peace, holding on, praying

The bishop of Metz, Mgr Schmitt, shone by his modem ism. Jean Madiran had openly contradicted him in the review Itinéraires. Father Calmel commented:

As long as the Pope has not unloaded your bishop - or as long as your bishop has not retracted his profession of heretical faith, and retracted it by giving pledges, that is to say, by dismissing Liégé and a number of priests from his diocese, I don’t see what can come out of Madiran’s booklet, For my part, if I knew what to do I would do it. If I knew what to do, I would do it. Write, pray; first of all pray. But in the end, priests on the whole continue to give up, and they will continue to do so as long as there are no bishops to take them back; and how can there be bishops as long as heretical figures like Schmitt continue to occupy the episcopal chairs that should be occupied by Catholic bishops?

Like many priests faithful to Tradition, Father Calmel welcomed with joy the Profession of Faith that Pope Paul VI promulgated on June 29, 1968, as well as his encyclical Humana viu, which recalled the Church’s long-standing teaching on conjugal morality. “Finally, the Pope has spoken!

Hell has broken loose, but it has been defeated; however, the Church’s trial is still getting worse. Let us pray.”

It was then that the bishops of France meeting at Lourdes published a declaration that distorted the meaning of the two writings of the pope. They said: “Contraception can never be a good. It is always a disorder, but this disorder is not always guilty. It happens, in fact, that spouses consider themselves to be in a real conflict of duties… On the one hand, they are aware of their duty to respect the openness to life of every conjugal act; they also feel in conscience that they must avoid or postpone a new birth, and are deprived of the resource of relying on biological rhythms. On the other hand, they do not see how they can renounce the physical expression of their love at this time without threatening the stability of their home (Gaudium et Spes, 51, § 1).

In this regard, we will simply recall the teaching of morality: when one is faced with an alternative of duties where, whatever decision one makes, one cannot avoid an evil, traditional wisdom foresees that one should seek before God which duty, in this case, is the greater. The spouses will determine this after a common reflection carried out with all the care required by their conjugal vocation

and of the few rare bishops and the pope”.

Feeling attacked, the bishops tried to defend themselves. Since they could not defend themselves on the level of doctrine, where they were indefensible, their argument was: “We are bishops. Good Christians know whom they should trust.” “Precisely,” replied Father Calmel, “not the bishops who teach heresy,” such as the Bishop of Metz and so many others. The attitude of the bishops of France was most alarming, and announced much harder times:

This will probably go further. We shall see this division of the episcopate, which we desire for the unity of the Church. For the unity of the Church requires the exclusion of heretics unless they have the frankness to exclude themselves. - A divided episcopate, priests running amok, serial defrockings, civil wars: this is what is likely. Now, it is not always the probable that happens. (…)

will be led, our episcopate, to play the game of the revolutionaries, by cowardice, in the hope that by this maneuver, it will avoid martyrdom. The appointment of Marty in Paris is significant; Marty the pimp from Rouergue {…), Marty who had received Khrushchev in the cathedral of Rheims in l960. He will try to swim and will be drowned in the revolutionary current that he will not want to condemn at any price’”.

In the face of such events, it was difficult to remain optimistic. Only the supernatural gaze of faith maintained confidence in hearts: “The trial of the Church will become much stronger, but I have every confidence that Jesus will hold us and that it is a grace to live in these times of trial.

The course of things seemed to be accelerating. At Pentecost 1969, the bishops held a sort of council in Paris; “It is obvious that everything is falling apart… But ours is the Queen of Victories. I went to pray to her last night, I was very happy.” Shortly afterwards, conventual priests met in Chur, Switzerland, under the presidency of Cardinal Suenens. This time, the cup seems to be full; “The double game is not going to be possible much longer. I followed closely the “council” of Chur (Switzerland) with Cardinal Suenens as pope and the hundred protesting priests as cardinals. This time, the church dreamed of by Vatican II and

which did not dare to say its name, will have lifted the mask: it is a new church. “In accordance with his habit, Father Calmel then raised his gaze to Heaven: “We will have the grace to suffer and to hold on without making a tragedy of it. Mary defends us.

- The question of the pope

If one could count on the help of Heaven, was it necessary to wait for the support of the Pope? Unfortunately, the Pope had two faces. At times he recalled the truths of all time (Humana vita. Profession of Faith) and thus consoled the souls faithful to Tradition, at other times he claimed to “govern the Church by convening synods and without condemning anyone”. Such a situation could be compared to “a kind of eclipse of the papacy”. Certainly, “it can neither be total nor very long, and we have enough grace to

sanctify ourselves and the Church holds… “However, it confused the faithful and gave free rein to the revolutionary forces in Christendom.

For years, the innovators had been relying on the “equivocation of the texts of Vatican II” which consisted in the fact that “they avoid the doctrinal and say only the pastoral”. Now they could take advantage of the Pope’s double standards. Hence the terrible perplexity of Catholics, because “the Pope is there to guard the Tradition and not to let another one be created (that of the revolutionary movement)”.

The political and social situation

Political life certainly had a great influence on the life of the Church. We were in the era of “May 1968”.

The “events” of 1968 began on May 3, following the entry of the police into the Sorbonne to arrest extreme left-wing students who had barricaded themselves in the building. The police cars were bombarded with various projectiles. The police responded by charging the group of students who had come from all over. The confrontations continued for a good part of the evening.

This little skirmish was only the beginning of a much more general riot that had taken off simultaneously, as if by chance, in several countries. The uprising spread to all the universities, factories, the world of culture and communication. Demonstrations multiplied, to the tune of the International, the general strike took hold. For the most convinced, it was truly a revolt of a political nature, whose objective was the overthrow of the regime of General de Gaulle and his Prime Minister Georges Pompidou. On May 29, the President of the Republic fled from Paris to Germany to visit General Massu. Did he want to secure the support of the army? Was it a staged event intended to create a fear of emptiness that would encourage his return? Or did he simply fear for his own safety?

On May 30, the simulation was reversed in favor of the State. On 31 May, Georges Pompidou formed his government. The legislative elections of June 23 saw the victory of the Gaullists.

Here is how these strikes and communist threats were experienced in a small school in Provence. Mother Hélène Jamet wrote to Father Calmel on June 13, 1968;

In our little Saint-Dominique class in Toulon, everything has gone very well so far. We have not stopped teaching a single day, with (on the worst day) more than half the number of children. (…) For five days, fathers took turns to “stand guard” in the entrance courtyard, in vain by the way (and very fortunately) since we did not see the nose of any assailant.

There was no shortage of threats (especially by telephone) in case we “disassociated” ourselves from the strikers and continued to be a feudal system, a fiefdom, *etc.* It seemed to us that the red clergy were no strangers to these anonymous and telephone threats. As you say, Father, the revolution is in full swing in the Church or at least in the clergy against the Church of Christ - Thank you for being there. At all times you are with the Lord and his Mother, our help and support. We have never felt it like during these days; so happy to be your daughters

In the face of political and social chaos, Father Calmel raised his eyes to the sky and encouraged his people to stand on high ground;

What can we say about the events that are certainly not over? We will talk about it, the great thing is to live close to God, close to Mary, being sure that they will keep us ready, even for the worst. I have prayed a lot to Saint Joan of Arc during these troubled days

In the immediate future, more than the disorders of the Fifth Republic, it was the souls that aroused the compassion of the son of Saint Dominic. The revolt was aimed less at the government than at the traditional values it was supposed to embody, those of the armed force, of morals that were considered too rigorous. It was a question of calling into question all the powers, the hierarchies and the prohibitions.

It was necessary to change the life. May 1968 realized a deep transformation in the minds, favored by the press and the television, and soon by the so-called National Education. Because, with the universities, it is all the teaching which adopted the idea of a “free” education.

138-Lctn’cde from mother Hclènejamct to father Calmel of June 13, 1968.

139-Lcttredu IZjiiin 1968.

140 - “Free our comrades” - “CRS = SS” - “Down with the police state” - “The power is: in

took again. Father Calmel saw it first as a loss of personality, the formation of robots, a pulverization of society. He wrote in November 1968;

Because of the new technical means of communication between men (especially radio and TV), unless there is great vigilance and an asceticism nourished by prayer in Christ, the dissolution of all personal life has become a danger on a planetary scale

Of course, the solution was not to become an “oddball”, to distinguish oneself by sordid habits or attire, but the human herd naked on the beaches, the human herd doing business, the human herd listening to the same nonsense on the radio all over the planet: this is a hallucinating possibility that should not be admitted.

Refuse to become energetic or decomposed.

Unfortunately, few people understood that the first reaction had to be that of holiness: “In the countries of Christian influence, too many Christians slouch quietly and ignore the ferment of heroism of Christian grace. “Moreover, with the search for the perfection of charity, it was necessary to work for the maintenance or restoration of the natural order. That is why the new threat represented by the new means of communication and the new conception of social life reinforced Father Calmel in his defense of authentic literature. It is in contact with civilization and Christian culture that one will preserve the personality at the same time Christian and human: “It is by being situated in it that we frequent the XVI’ century, and that we have reason to frequent it… I try to humanize myself through this contact, as a Christian who lives in this time of apocalypse”L “

The story of a soul

The terrible crisis of which Father Calmel was the helpless witness could not fail to affect his soul and his heart deeply, and even his physical health. He was a man built like the others, gifted with a very delicate sensitivity, animated by a very great ideal, but also weakened, like everyone else, by the wounds of original sin. It will be useful to interrupt

It will be useful here to interrupt the account of his activities in order to try to follow the life of grace in this priestly soul, and thus to discover the deep source from which his external preaching was drawn.

In truth, his correspondence during the years 1966-1969 presents nothing new, but rather a maturing and deepening of the graces that had animated him since the beginning of

his religious life. More than ever, he wanted to be a priest of Jesus Christ, a true contemplative, a follower of Mary, but also a man intimately convinced of his own disarmament with regard to the task that lay before him.

- Priest of Jesus Christ

In this time of what he called the Third World War, Father Calmel found a brother in arms in the person of Ernest Psichari, who died in combat on August 22, 1914. It was in August 1966 that he seems to have discovered the grandson of Renan, who had been converted and had become a Dominican tertiary:

The life of Psichari… fascinating to read. I am moved to the depths of my soul to “discover” a Dominican friar so rooted in the most authentic Dominican tradition. It is enough to make you cry. - He is a man, Psichari, of a righteousness, a sense of honor, a generosity that one almost never meets anymore. One finds only gelatinous men (if one can say so)

But Father Calmel wanted above all to be a priest of Jesus Christ. On March 29, 1967, for the 26th anniversary of his ordination to the priesthood, he had the joy of being able to sing Mass in the presence of some Dominican sisters, guided by Mother Hélène Jamet. In a personal note, he comments: Now I have just reread the Discourse after the Last Supper, as the bishop who ordained me had recommended me to do on each anniversary of my ordination. May I live more and more of that supernatural life which Jesus gave us and which derives from his sacrifice for us; may I be more and more inhabited by his Holy Spirit; may I be his courageous and peaceful apostle in the midst of a world which has now set up its agencies within the Church itself - but in vain.

As such, he was inhabited by an ardent and painful compassion for souls. About a particular Catholic writer, he regretted that he “does not feel enough the spiritual distress of so many poor people. The important thing when one feels this distress so much is to remain in Jesus and close to him - being assured

Lord Jesus, that we are captivated by him, even when that face is veiled in the Passion

The high conception that the religious had of the priesthood appears particularly in the note that he wrote on the occasion of the 28th anniversary of his ordination to the priesthood.

So I reread in a row and even reread twice the whole speech after the Last Supper, as the bishop who ordered me to do so had advised me. What can I retain from his divine words?

I note these: “The prince of this world is coming, but he has no part in me. “(Jn 14:30) I believe this and I beg the Lord to hasten the day when the prince of this world will have absolutely nothing to claim in me. Lord, create in me a pure heart.

I note again, “If the world hates you, know that I am the first one it has hated. “So I should not be surprised that I am being cast aside. This form of persecution is foretold by the Lord when he predicts to us the hatred of the world. The words about the Holy Spirit, his action in our souls and in the Church are beautiful to cry over and should keep me reassured, courageous, valiant. It is true that, quite often, I do not know well what I have to do as a manifestation of apostolate in the present situation of the Church; but the Spirit who has been given to us will teach me on this point also, since he teaches me on the infinitely more

culminating point of the apostolate and of prayer? Lord, consider that I am one of the priests through whom you wished to offer the Mass; for the sake of your holy name give this priest who begs you to offer the Mass ever more holy

There is no doubt that Providence was preparing his servant for the struggles that the liturgical reform would bring.

* A contemplative

Parallel to this deepening of priestly spirituality, Father Calmcl experienced a particularly strong call to contemplation during this period. The more violent and painful the crisis in the Church became, the more he felt drawn to prayer, to interior silence:

To the extent that we are filled by him, burning with his love, our resistance to persevere in the faith and in Christian customs, our efforts to support and lead our brothers, however painful and laborious they may be, will remain peaceful, quiet, relaxed

liiraison strengthens the virtues, gives them a soul of charity, places them under the action of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, makes them heroic.

Ibraison is in the hands of God who gives it as he wants. Let yourself be touched. Lord Jesus, by the heart of your mother and grant us the gift of prayer; and make it grow. For the Church to live, I am asked to have the strength of the martyrs, but to have this strength, the gift of prayer is necessary.

May St. John of the Cross obtain for us, together with St. Dominic, a great gift of contemplation - so that we may grow unceasingly in love, in the midst of the present struggles and trials, far from tiring or hindering us

The prayer of the earth is only an anticipation of that of Heaven. On the occasion of his “pilgrimage” to the tomb of Ernest Psichari, he writes;

The Lord wanted to let the very few pilgrims who will come here under the snow know that, from now on, for those who have had faith and have given their lives for love, the time of defilement is over, the time of noisy talk is over, the time of distraction and dispersion is over. From now on, for them, everything is brought back to purity, to the peace of a completely purified soul. From now on, sheltered and recollected under the mantle of the Virgin, they contemplate the face of God and the most holy humanity of Christ in the ineffable sUence of a very pure adoration

To enter into such an interior prayer, he had to consent to painful purifications of the soul. To be all for Jesus, one must be empty of

How would we be transformed and burning with love if we were encumbered with ourselves, so that he would not be free to give himself? In order to be able to say with the saints “I will be consumed by love” (St. John of the Cross), we must first say with them: “supported without any support, comforted without any consolation”.

152 - Note to Rossignol, in Belgium, December 30, 1968.

In August 1968, he understood more clearly that such a union of love and such a militant fidelity could not be realized nor duet without immolation:

The purification of our soul requires us to accept the immolation (or to do it ourselves) in an attitude of prayer. “In the name of your Passion, Lord God, let me not stand in the way. In the name of your immaculate mother the Virgin Mary, may there be no barrier in my soul that prevents you from passing. “

Let the penances sought be sought in prayer. This search must dispose us to accept the true sacrifices sent by the Lord: moreover, it is because these voluntary sacrifices have a dispositive role that we must not abandon them - except for a well-founded reason - in spite of the pretexts that arise - food, comfort, useless curiosities, travel and distractions.

Lord, so that my soul may be pure and you may unite me to you ever more intimately, give me to pray to you in faith, with persevering and loyal prayer; give me to desire and love immolation in an attitude of prayer’.

In order to reach such a summit, the religious knew that he was surrounded and helped by the masters of the contemplative life and called upon them for help. On January 4, 1968, during a long journey, he read again “the entire commentary on the Canticle (of St. John of the Cross)”, and he intended to take it up again little by little afterwards. And to St. Thomas Aquinas he asked for “the strength of love”.

- “This is your Mother”

Whoever reads the writings and correspondence of Father Calmel soon realizes that his Marian piety was not just another devotion. It was a life, omnipresent in his study, in

his choices, in his preaching, even in his conception of Christian politics. More profoundly, it was deve

153 - Interview in the Carmelite convent of Virton on the purification of the blade, August 18, 1968.

On several occasions, the Dominican had manifested a filial and intelligent dependence on the Blessed Virgin Mary. For if God is a mystery, so is his action in our hearts. That is why, in his growth in God, man needs to be guided by a mother:

However lucid someone may be, what does he know of his own heart, what does he know concretely of the divine life and morals? (...) One would have to be presumptuous and even rude to imagine that one will know how to take care of oneself properly and welcome the divine life in a suitable manner. We will want to correct ourselves and we will be inhuman; we will want to be patient and we will be complicit; we will want to help our brothers and we will hinder them, we will want to put them out into the open and we will let them slip. As soon as it is a question of the divine life, what Christian in general and what apostle in particular have not understood that he has no understanding of it? It is too delicate, too simple, too mysterious a reality to have the slightest hope of adapting to it in any way apart from the invitation, the lights and the action of the woman blessed among all women.

The delicacy of the Dominican's relationship with the Blessed Virgin appears in this confession;

There are nuances that we are unable to grasp, a way of doing things that escapes us, if we lack a maternal

intervention, that word spoken softly, that look that immediately reaches the secret of the heart, that gesture without the sound of words. This action, this maternal presence, is granted to the baptized, and even mysteriously to every man coming into this world. The blessed woman, the mother of divine grace, the new Eve does not cease to care for us. The Mother of God is therefore the mother of our supernatural life and of its blossoming in contemplation. Such was the intention of Our Lord when he gave John, and each of the baptized, to his mother from the height of the Cross. “Woman, here are your sons,” the Savior seems to say, “so that you may obtain for them holiness; so that they may be led by you to my perfect charity which burns like an unquenchable fire ■’*. “This was the secret of Father Calmel’s contemplative life:

156 - “Salve Rigina, for U feast of the Immaculate Conception,” Itméraires n” 48, December 1960, pp. 34-37; see R.-Th, Calmel. Voici ta Mire, NEL. 2005. p. 43.

157 - “Marie, nouvelle Ève”, Itinéraires n” 77, November 1963. p. 100-l 11; see R.-Th. Calmel, Voici ta Mire. NEL, 2005, p. 78.

158 - ” Maternité spirituelle et téalisme de notre combat “, Itinéraires n” 86. scptembrc-octobrt 1964,p, 166-172;seeR.-Th.Calmel.l4/o “A/ére,NEL.2005.p. 101-114.

Let us be quickly consumed in love. Let us not cease to implore this

grace of the mother of Beautiful Love’”.

Give me to desire and love immobUity in an attitude of pride and love. May hope never dry up in my soul. May it be like that of our mother on Holy Friday and Saturday"" I implore from you the purity of soul, the purity of love, the unconcern of myself. The forest under the snow made me feel, from infinitely far, but feel all the same, how pure, silent and sweet you are; obtain for us the purity of contemplation. Come soon the day, Virgin

of Immaculate Conception

A letter from 1970 hints at a Marian grace that can be described as mystical, an unspeakable experience of the holiness of the Mother of God. Mary, masterpiece of grace, had conquered his soul as a priest;

) I feel, as I do every year on this date, - oh, it's only in a terribly imperfect way, but I still feel something of the beauty of the Virgin Mary. One would like to say: "It is not possible if one did not know how much God is mercy and beauty.

- A clay vase

This urgent call that Father Calmel felt for the contemplative life could have turned him away from the ministry of preaching. Like the hermits of all times, he would have gladly fled to the desert to live alone with the One. It was as a Dominican, however, that he understood this primacy of contemplation. To a twenty-year-old girl who had been fascinated by Charles de Foucauld, but who had received the call to Dominican life, he wrote: Foucauld: admirable sense of the hidden life and holiness of Nazareth. But his charism, his grace in the Church is not that of the preacher; and the teaching sisters of Toulouse are daughters of Saint Dominic.

Knowledge. I owe a lot to Father de Foucauld; I have practiced him a lot; but I have always tried to use him according to my vocation which is different from his.

On the other hand, did not such a high ideal run the risk of favoring, in the religious, what is commonly called “the pride of the (false) contemplative”, The texts of Father Calmel dating from this period show that the grace which impelled him to an intimate union with God left him fully aware of his own weakness, so to speak, the same grace which armed him for the battles of the Church, disarmed him with the feeling of his fragility.

He also asked in prayer “to be faithful in this trial I the Church, to be happy to have to offer such a trial, not to let himself be troubled by seeing the progressive demolition ‘*-’”. In the face of so many abandons among priests and religious, in the face of certain Dominicans who could sow “doubt everywhere and ruin faith in Jesus Christ”, without being bothered by anyone, he felt the danger of bitterness: I suffer much less from the inclination to bitterness in the face of so many great treasons. However, may Jesus set up my indignation, which I do not express outside

This religious, who wrote on the back of a picture this simple prayer: “Virgin Mary, obtain for me joy and poverty”, was able to touch and console souls visited by trouble and illness. It is from this period that the note “On prayer in times of crisis” dates:

I would say to those who are exhausted, disoriented, unhappy: prayer, perseverance, persistence in praying, gradually puts everything back in place in our hearts and

allows us to continue the struggle in a Christian world where we look like idiots. But prayer lets us know from experience that our struggle is that of the Wisdom of God, because it is the struggle of the militant Church itself; the true Church; the one that will not change, even if large portions of its troops come to disband and change sides

The extent of the decadence surpassed human conceptions and forces. Father Calmel himself confessed his difficulty in believing “that we are living in such a period” and that the Pope himself encourages the innovators. “It is the truth. The more I know how to say it to myself in prayer - which is a grace I implore - the more I will live in love and peace.

t de Prouilhe

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ivurc ^ *” December 5, 1968, he

P>”* P’””’ P‘“i courageous. (…) Prayer

ix and courage in this trial of the Church with bishops who have lost their hearts. “Following a pilgrimage to Domremy in October 1969, he said:

The more I see the situation deteriorating on all levels, the more I try to be indebted, trusting, abandoned, grateful, being absolutely sure that the virtue of redemption acquired through the Cross is in no way diminished by

Saint Joan of Arc will intervene for France in one way or another and will obtain for us to fight, suffer and die in peace, like herself: by the King of Heaven

Such is the spirit of childhood to which the Dominican aspired with all his soul and of which he had already

sketched the main lines in 1950 in Si ton œil est simple. We find it summarized in the following poem that Father Calmel composed during a train trip, to help a sister live in a state of prayer during the retreat she was about to begin:

Trust in the Virgin; she is queen, she is mother; Simply adhere to what Jesus says.

In great and sweet silence adore his mystery. To welcome his love in all confidence To stand before him in a state of helplessness And whatever the weather, to stand resolute

And on the occasion of the anniversary of sc

I entered religion, he summed it all up

32 years I am a son of Saint Dominic (All Saints). May the Lord hasten to sanctify me

This overview of Father Calmel's correspondence during these years of upheaval is sufficient to measure the abyss that separated him from the din of the world, from the frenzy of the innovators, from the ugliness of ambitions. The Holy Spirit was preparing his instrument, digging into this soul, enlightening and refining this mtelligencc, softening and soothing this heart in view of a more complete union, that of the witness of truth in persecution.

Father Roger-Thomas Calmel

Give us a bishop

As betrayals multiplied, as apostasy spread and as ecclesiastical persecution against Tradition became more violent, a growing number of faithful and priests showed their attachment to the Church of all times and were determined to hold on at all costs. In the midst of them,

Father Calmel understood very well what his mission was; the positions are hardening: many lay people are determined not to let themselves be led to apostasy (and to the impossibility of praying) by unconscious or apostate priests and bishops. I see more and more that my role is to help these lay people to live the primacy of prayer and to explain to them the content of the faith. Madiran is very convinced of this. May Jesus sustain me and transform me in him at the same time that he charges me with this ministry

In fact, the brother preacher was called from all sides. After Easter 1967, he had to go to Espalion “where M”” F., with her five children (the widow of a captain assassinated in Algiers): she had gathered a circle of Christians who wanted to hold out. At the end of the same month, he gave a conference in Toulouse at the home of M. Vernette, one of his great friends, a former architect of the Dominican teaching sisters. On April 23, he was already in Paris for “a meeting with young people. In June, he gave another conference in Toulouse and preached a recollection for the men of Carcassonne. From these apostolic journeys, he keeps the following impression;

What I have learned from my meetings in Paris (and everywhere) is that Jesus asks us to sanctify ourselves in the midst of trial - continuing, of course, to resist as much as we can. But the demolition machine works everywhere; its violence is not equal everywhere: that’s the difference. The Sisters of Saint-Cloud are in trouble and their parish priest is working with diabolical zeal to turn the parish upside down‘7

The initiatives to defend the Tradition multiplied. On September 3, some “good boys” asked him to be chaplain of a section

of an international order of chivalry. Because of certain ambiguities concerning the very nature and obligations of this “knighthood,” Father Calrael preferred to decline this kind invitation.

However, he encouraged all resistance to decadence. The times were too hard, the war too universal, to be able to argue about accidental things. While some “right-thinking” people were complaining about the overly polemical attitude of certain defenders of Tradition, Father Calmel wrote a note which shows his broad view and his crusader’s heart: I have something else to do than to quibble about the manner of such and such.

The situation is too serious to waste time on these vain arguments.

For from the cartoon stories that little children are made to read to the lectures for the so-called serious, from the dreams of simple dreamy peasants to the Babylonian projects of the great engineers, from the pastoral plans of the episcopal plenary assembly to the liturgy of the least vicar, from the new style of life of the convents to the infantile and vernacular neo-rubricism of the cloistered nuns, the modern world has become so uniformly desacralized and dumbed down, and the clerics show such a violent and factitious eagerness to betray their vocation, that I can only congratulate every Christian who undertakes, with the weapons of faith, to make some breach in this

diabolical straitjacket. I am not going to quarrel with him about the way he handles spiritual weapons. I only wish for his sake and for mine that the Holy Spirit himself would give us the ability to wield them".

As a tireless preacher, he did everything he could to help Christians keep their faith. On January 4, 1969, he spoke in Dijon to parents of school children. After having given them a rapid description of the present situation, he exhorted them to "unite contemplative peace with untiring pugnacity". To the teachers, he urges them to study theology in depth, which consists in "intelligently adoring the mysteries. To families, he preached "a quiet anti-conformism to the prevailing debasement". They will then be labelled with all sorts of labels, that of being "diehards", of forming "a reserve of redskins". Let it be said," he replied. And

176- "Paris-Metz train, the mother in front of me and her three children" (note by Father Calnicl).

of Father Calmel),

uvréc what is stupid " {n

with his usual humor, he confesses: "I have so many labels on the Jo: that soon I won't need to knit anymore! "

In spite of the very good reception of the priests of the master's degree of the cathedral, he had to note that "here as everywhere the free schools, insensibly, are becoming more and more important: what a debacle. I will try to rally those who want to resist'*".

Besides, what more could he do?

Pray, hold on, fight: as far as the state of the Church is concerned, I don’t think we can do anything else; for the evil is everywhere considerable, I see it well from my Parisian meetings. But the Lord is watching

In April 1969, he planned to reunite the priests who resisted the revolution in the Church.

I am considering an open letter to priests who will commit to six points;

- preaching of the faith of all time;

- catechism of all time:

- Roman Latin canon;

- communion on the lips;

- cassock or habit of the Order;

- spread the rosary.

We will see, let us pray. I am sure that little by little the best priests will gather

Very quickly, he gives up this idea which seems to him premature and especially which does not correspond to his own mission;

Finally, no 1 I will continue to write articles on theology and spirituality. But visibly rallying priests I don’t think I can do it in the present mess. And if the Lord wanted me to, he would make me do it. Until then (if it comes to that) I will continue as before and try to pray better.

Nevertheless, the network of his friends and the people who called on him grew month by month. Thus, in June 1969, he preached a recollection to some gentlemen near Avignon and visited his friend Pierre Debray in Aix-en-Provence. In August, he met the parish priest of Nègrepclisse,

Choulot, who gave him “carte blanche” to celebrate the Assumption Mass. At Prouilhe, he preached recollections from time to time for former retreatants from Chabeuil who called on him. One of them wrote to the Dominican provincial: “Fortunately we have Father Calmel! “

To all, he preached vigilance and perseverance in the faith, accepting all the separations that God would impose on their fidelity. “The first Cathars in Prouilhe broke with their families, he explained in October 1969. We too, without sectarianism, must break with modernism. “From then on, he regretted the blindness of those who, too attached to people, accepted any teaching coming from Rome, even the one that was ostensibly opposed to Tradition. In October 1969, he had already warned his friends against the error that “does not want to see that the pope can be mistaken” (among others, Marcel Clément).

- Ponuallec

In this turmoil, the Dominican Sisters of the Holy Spirit of Pontcallec continued their work of teaching. At the end of August, Father Calmel was invited to the consecration of their new church. Being alone in the vicariate of Prouilhe at that time, he had to give up the trip. He made up for it by passing through their institute in Saint-Cloud each time he went to the East, especially around Christmas. Then he would stay for eight or ten days, which allowed the sisters to

have all the Masses for the Nativity celebrations. He stayed at the school. He was very simple in his manner,” testified the former sisters. There was something very simple and amusing about him, but otherwise very serious. From the moment he crossed the threshold of the chapel, you could feel his recollection, a great respect for the sacred. He remained in very poor health, and often came to the chapel with a cold.

183-Decided after sixty-two years of priesthood, on December 25, 1991. Father Jean Choulot was a priest of the diocese of Monrauban. He exercised his priestly ministry as curate in Moncauban, then as parish priest in Canspagne (Montalzat), then as dean priest in Nègrcpclisse. From 1930,

lonc known on this occasion remember his powerful silhouette and this trait t]hat characterized him: one of possessing and communicating fundamental certainties” (Arnaud de Lassus, Action Familiale 184 ■ “It was a very beautiful church, which was 100 km away and falling into ruin. They (have

a steel structure. From the pictures, it looks great. I would like to give them the pleasure to go there. But I am alone for another three weeks. So I will go another time. “(Letter of August 23, 1967)

very tired. When he reached the top of the hill of Saint-Cloud, he could not go on. Sometimes, when people came to visit him, he would sit down and ask a favor: “Could you say the rosary with me? In January 1969, he wrote: “The stay in Saint-Cloud was necessary for me, because my resistance is limited. I consider myself very lucky to be housed in this quiet garret. The sisters are very good.

In November 1967, the son of St. Dominic composed a note for them entitled: Revolutionary misappropriation of the Gospel.

In December 1968, the Dominican Sisters of the Holy Spirit lost their bishop and their father. Father Berto died on December 17, 1968, “in the midst of a battle, his heart of flesh broken by the self-destruction of the Church “*. On his way back, passing through Saint-Cloud, he said: “He was someone who loved children very much, but with a lot of detachment. “He could also admire the courage of the sisters who “are valiant in this mourning”.

In the special issue of ‘Itinéraires’ dedicated to the memory of Father Berto, Father Calmel made a contribution that showed the depth of the friendship that united the two priests;

One of the most striking features of Father Berto’s interior life was the vigor, the purity, the logic of his faith in the Church. (…)

What was too human in the members of the Church, including some great people, did not escape him at all. If he spoke of it on occasion with quiet freedom, it was because he knew, to the depths of his soul, that the Church is not that; that which, in the members of the Church, belongs to human stupidity, to the darkness of Satan, and not to the authority and holiness of Jesus Christ (p. 44).

The same goes for the Supreme Pontiff.

He was not an unconditional admirer of popes. But he believed in the Pope and he loved him for what, in this unique man, truly belongs to the vicar of Jesus Christ, an impregnable dwelling place to all the forces of hell. This granite-like faith was what had struck me most, what had helped me most in my first encounters with the Father, at a time when I felt very much (and more than was appropriate) for certain procedures of churchmen- (It is true that all the

185-1-ettrcof 10janvicrl9é9 186-Jean Madiran./rfn/ra/ran' 132, April 1969, 187'Lcttrcof 10 January 1969.

epidermis do not even have the same delicacy. Some are admirably tough and others as predisposed to bruises and chewing).

But it is also true, and even more so, that among those who have faith in the Church, not all have the same quality of faith. The Father's faith was of a flawless crystal; He is one of those who most surely led me to understand that if sin exists in all clerics, without distinction of their hierarchical rank, to have faith in the Church consists in not making an issue of it, I mean not to doubt because of it any of the points of the

hierarchical constitution of the Church, but at the same time to fight mercilessly against the germs of error and death that such a member of the hierarchy would make penetrate into the bosom of the Church: in sinu et gremio Ecclesice; to fight mercilessly first of all by prayer and sacrifice, but also, according to our strength and rank, by preaching, controversy, direct exposition; - and the courageous exercise of authority for those who are the holders of it (p. 45).

It should be said again, or rather it should have been said first, - but others have done it and done it well, - that the Father was fundamentally good (…). It would be necessary to evoke, as far as it is possible to translate the secrets of a soul, the extent and tenderness of his affection which allowed him to bring out, as if without seeking it, and to direct with a rare balance, spiritual communities as different as an orphanage, a congregation of sisters, a group of priests (p. 46)

Calmel's confidence in the virtue of Fr. Berto was also based on his faith in the effectiveness of his intercessor. On January 1, 1970, the Dominican confided to his deceased friend his most pressing intentions:

From February 2 to 11, novena for my Order, the congregation of Mother Helene, and Archbishop Lefebvre, who is quite ill, in a clinic; I trust that Our Lady and Father Berto will heal him'*'.

On hearing the news of the prelate's recovery, the Dominican exclaimed: "Archbishop Lefebvre is out of the woods: Deo gratias! and to St. Pius X and to Father Berto and to Our Lady

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Father Roger-Thomas Calmel

reads more beautifully his fight of resistance against

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all in all very superficial. It was quickly resolved. But it was an opportunity for Father Calmel to express his feelings about a certain conception of Catholic resistance. The acceleration of the crisis, the prodigious advances of modernism and apostasy were in fact generating among some an effervescence and a harshness which irritated, it is the word that seems to us the most accurate, the sensibility of Father Calmel and drew out of him in private some scathing words. 11 regretted very much the bulletins which thought only of “nailing the beak to the heretics rather than nourishing the souls. As if it was enough to nail their beaks”. Moreover, he could not bear the “shouting of adjutants”, the motets which only know how to “contradict (often rightly) without almost ever rising to the great serene and pacifying presentations”, the “ambitious” who seem to take advantage of the crisis to make a career, such a priest who, as he liked to say with a mischievous smile, “is suffering from the cirrhosis of the self”, or finally “the resisters for the faith who mount their necks so much that they have the necks of giraffes; men with giraffe necks and who scream like rhinoceroses being skinned! “

Certainly, Father Calmel would never have given the public such expressions, by which he gave free rein to his mood and his humor, and he would have easily retracted them later on. After all, they were not so much about this or that

person, but rather about the situation at the time. More than the character and training of any one person, did not the difficulty come from the isolation of these deserving resisters who were left to themselves?

- The abbot of Nantes

Father Calmel tried to keep in touch with the Abbot of Nantes. During his meetings, the Dominican tried to enlighten the fiery orator on the laws of the struggle of faith and of Christian polemics. Thus, in December 1967, he was delighted to see published in La Contre-Réforme a text inviting the readers to recite the three daily Angelus for their perseverance in the faith and for Tradition'. "I had asked him twenty times! "

Father Roger-Thomas Calmel

It was then that a small difference of opinion between Jean Maditu and the Abbot of Nantes allowed Father Calmel to put his finger on the present fragility of the Catholic resistance.

The abbot of Nantes writes to me, but without any precision, that he disagrees with Madiran's L'hérésie du xx'siècle. (I suppose that for the abbot it is the pope who is guilty: for Madiran it is the bishops.

In my opinion, the responsibilities, real on both sides, are not of the same order: the Pope is wrong, not by having failed in the faith, but by omission, by failing to condemn those who have failed; but the bishops are wrong by having failed in the faith (the new catechism) and not only by failing to condemn. Anyway, I can only beg Our Lady to give us some real bishops; I cannot do the role of the bishops: it is enough for me to be a preacher. - But I see once again that my role

resembles neither that of the Abbot of Nantes nor that of Madiran™’.

As time went on, the need for a bishop to speak, for a descendant of the apostles to openly defend Catholic tradition, became more and more necessary. No priest or layman could replace him.

The Abbot of Nantes launched a noisy campaign against the heretical catechism. He was summoned by his bishop (May 23, 1969). He was criticized by Rome, but in a confused and ambiguous way (August 1969). The Pope declared the priest “disqualified”, without using any other punishment. In short, the Pope’s response implied that the Abbé de Nantes was right in his criticism of the French episcopate, but that the Pope did not want to intervene to condemn the real culprits. “So much the better that there is no more,” wrote Father Calmel. But this absence of authority was still disturbing, if at least it could go so far as to “tolerate” the old Ordo missa^^!

The imminent promulgation of the new Mass brought together all the traditional forces. It was even possible to think for a moment that all would remain united in the same spirit:

Before Christmas, I will try to see this dear abbot of Nantes who is crying out for me. The rapprochement, always closer, of Madiran with him, the convergence of Faction: Dulac. de Nantes. Madiran (a little La Pensée catholique^ all these new facts lead me to believe that the Lord wants us to do even more to defend what is right and what is wrong.

of good priests, and to force Paul VI to get out of his horrible mess; and then, with the grace of God

However, Father Calmcl was becoming more and more dismayed by the attitude of the Abbé de Nantes. If the latter was often right in his attacks on modernism, he was clearly overstepping his real mission. In September 1969, the priest compared himself to Saint Joan of Arc. And in November of the same year, he pushed “modesty” to the point of affirming that “Jesus stands on the side of Maurras and ours™’. “Even if “the orientation of the abbot’s thought, in the whole of his letters, is essentially correct,” and that one should not be complicit in the new mass “which leads to rheresy without being heretical,” these expressions shocked Father Calmel’s delicacy of soul.

Above all, the latter directly opposed the claim of the abbot of Nantes, manifested in Counter-Reformation No. 26, to be the guide of Catholic priests while insisting that they accept the reforms. Father Calmel wrote vivaciously:

Dismayed by pages 14 and 15 of n” 26 of the letter of the abbot of Nantes; I write to him… He claims to guide the priests and he leads them into the path of treason. (…) Ah Lord, have mercy on your priests; I give you my life so that we may keep the true Mass and I trust in you™*.

- The Coache ahé

At the same time, a much more discreet priest began to make his presence felt. Born in 1920 at Ressons-sur-Matz in the diocese of Beauvais, Louis Coache studied at the minor seminary of Moncel at Pont-Sainte-Maxence. He entered the French seminary in Rome, then the one in Versailles because of the war. Ordained a priest on April 24, 1943, he was first a curate at the cathedral of Beauvais, and was appointed

parish priest of Montjavoult in 1958. After attending courses at the Catholic Institute of Paris, he obtained a doctorate in Canon Law with a thesis on “The Ministerial Power of the Pope”. The courageous parish priest made himself known first with his Letter from a country parish priest to his confreres, which he sent to the priests of his diocese for Christmas 1964, then with his Letter from a country parish priest to his confreres, which he sent to the priests of his diocese for Christmas 1964.

204 - “What a phenomenon to compare sc to Joan of Arc. Truly, may the Virgin keep him. “(Letter of September 19, 1969)

205-Letter of November 20, 1969.

206-Lcttrc of November 24, 1969.

by his Nouvelle lettie d’un curé de campagne (September 8, 1965), which was widely distributed. At the same time, Father Coache wrote an article entitled “La nouvelle religion” in the review Le Monde et la vie, which earned him his first reprimand from his bishop. In June 1967, the parish priest of Montjavouli published his Dernière lettre d’un curé de campagne (Last letter of a country priest) with a circulation of 150,000 copies. In addition, he launched a magazine, Le Combat di k foi (The fight of faith), which was published on February 11, 1968. For Corpus Christi in 1968, Father Coache invited his bishop to preside over the procession. The latter took advantage of the occasion to attack his subordinate, forbidding him to make this procession.

By letter, Father Calmel did not hesitate to encourage and advise him. Last Sunday in Montjavoult, near Beauvais, a parish priest who sometimes writes to me (Father Coache)

maintained his procession of the Blessed Sacrament; 1500 people came from the Paris region; two hours of procession under an uninterrupted downpour… It is 1 such signs that one realizes to what extent the grace of God is at work in the Church which is always alive

The bishop tried to condemn the courageous priest. But Father Coack, a doctor of Canon Law, was able to defend himself masterfully, while continuing his resistance. In collaboration with Father Noel Barbara, he composed his famous Vade mecum of the faithful Catholic, which contained the Catholic principles on the subject of prayer, the Mass, communion and the catechism, and added a considerable list of priests who were already resisting the modernist avalanche. Published at the end of 1968, 150,000 copies had already been sold by the end of January 1969. With the fourth edition, in 1975, the number of readers rose to 360,000.

Such a success was intolerable in the eyes of the modernist episcopate. The parish priest of Montjavoult resisted as much as he could. In May 1969, Father Calmel rejoiced that his appeal to Rome had been received. Thus, for the time being, “since Father Coache has appealed, he can continue, and Rome is very slow to judge™. “

His suspension by Bishop Desmazières of Beauvais was notified to him on June 12, 1969, and he was removed from his position as parish priest on July 4. A new appeal by Father Coache to Rome delayed the procedure. However,

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his condemnation was confirmed by a cardinal decree and approved by Pope Paul VI, on July 1975°’.

Certainly, the Roman slowness left some room for maneuver for the defenders of Tradition, but the obstinacy of the modernists would not let go until they could silence them. Thus, for example, the pilgrimage to Vivières, in which Father Calmel had been participating since 1965, was finally forbidden by the local clergy and had to be transferred to Paris

- Archbishop Lefebvre

The various initiatives taken by simple faithful or by isolated priests were meritorious and necessary. With time, they showed their limits. As the modernist stranglehold tightened and abandonments multiplied, it became increasingly clear to Father Calmel that the solution to the crisis could only come from a bishop.

As early as 1967, he addressed himself to Archbishop Lefebvre. Dulac his conviction that only this prelate, Superior General of the Fathers of the Holy Spirit, could bring unity to this struggle for the defense of the faith:

makes me want to write to Archbishop Lefebvre again. Of course, he risks a lot if he takes a public stand against the current reformism. But if he did not do so, he would risk as much, it seems to me, and above all, the security of conscience that many need and the principle of unity that we lack would not be granted to us… So how can we escape chaos? The day when we will be able to say: “A bishop has taken a position; our resistance to the liturgical, dogmatic and disciplinary upheaval is no longer the work of simple laypeople, of simple priests, but we have a bishop”, that day things will be clarified, we will rally the hesitant, and other bishops especially will follow. I ask Our Lady and St. Dominic every day that Archbishop Lefebvre speak out. I see only him…

A few weeks later, the Dominican was jubilant. He could write to a correspondent:

I tell you our union of prayer for everything, but especially for Archbishop Lefebvre (Father of the Holy Spirit) whom I know: who must make a

209 ■ The abbc Coachc then retired to the Maison Lacordairc in Flavigny which he had purchased in 1971. Ü moved to Moulin du Pin (53) in May 1985 where he died on August 21, 1994.

210-Letter dated June 15, 1969.

The Dominican received with enthusiasm the news of the foundation of Archbishop Lefebvre. Everything is in place," he shook his head. "At last, a bishop is here, but what a surprise! Archbishop Lefebvre, seeing himself forced to found a seminary that was to open in Fribourg, put his trust in Father Calmel to the point of inviting him to become its director. One can guess the astonishment of the preaching brother. Placing himself in front of 1

see with the Order. But I don't think that the services expected of me (if I dare say!!!) are in the order of the exercise of authority.

Dominican Itprédication

Father Calmel knew that he was called by God to the ministry of preaching, which he intensified as much as his superiors and his strength would allow. He rejoiced in the

place given to him in Prouilhe and in the comhension of “his prince”, Father Rzewuski-‘.

On March 10, 1967, he was able to resume his classes in Toulouse. Regularly, he went up to Fanjeaux, by solex when the weather permitted it, to confess a small community of sisters. For the holy days of 1967, he was sent to Capdenac, in the Lot region of France. Here is the report of his preaching in parishes; I am doing my best to minister in three parishes of rare indifference - which have been abandoned for twenty-five years - and which the present parish priest, a good one, is trying to revive. My only desire is to come closer to Jesus Christ and to continue to proclaim and defend the Gospel, insofar as this is possible. For it is obvious that darkness and confusion are spreading ever more widely. But Jesus, the victor, makes us overcome with him and cannot abandon us. This is evident in these Easter celebrations

For Pentecost, he was again invited to two parishes. He was delighted, “but I cannot take the place of a parish priest, and this parish priest (like so many others) is too discouraged and amorphous to take an active interest in his parishioners.

Then it was a retreat for ladies and young ladies at Prouilhe from July 12 to 16. It was not very crowded, since only seven retreatants participated.

The absences of some people in the summer gave him peace, but also a lot of work. He was able to see at close quarters the frivolity of some Christians who were passing through, and sometimes deplored their lack of modesty and dignity. At this morning’s Mass,” he wrote in September, “at the time of the

I told a young girl who came with her arms completely naked to get a veil; she pouted and left.

When he was not traveling to Paris (recollections at the Compagnons d’/ti- ‘ néraires), to Saint-Cloud or to Lorraine, Father Calmel was ministering to the nuns. In the course of the year 1967, he preached to them on the theological varnishes that help us avoid turning in on ourselves:

Let us beware of letting the gaze fall on us. Even and especially when we experience our impotence, let us beware of paying attention to our impotence only in the light of his omnipotence; of thinking of our impotence only in the light of his Holiness; of seeing our unrighteousness only in the light of his Perfection; of suffering the tribulations of the Church only in the light of his victory and infallible assistance™.

An assiduous and devout reader of St. John of the Cross, he was particularly fond of preaching in carmelites. For the time being, the one in Pamiers was open to him. He was able to give a conference there again in February 1968 and to return there on October 3 and 4, 1969. During his summer travels, he visited again the carmel of Virton, but also the one of Matagne where the relics of Saint Radegonde are. He stayed there from August 13 to 22, 1968. The following year, he met in Belgium the Carmelite prior of Chèvremont who had asked to meet him “On June 12 and 13, 1969, the Dominican was in the Carmel of Domrémy. On November 22, 1969, he preached three days in a row at the Carmelite monastery in Virton. His account shows clearly his attachment to contemplative souls:

Truly eager community. May Our Lady make all these flowers bloom in the garden of her Son! I have given them back their good, these dear sisters, instructing them with the saints of the Carmel who first instructed me: St. John of the Cross and Teresita. (…) Tonight I will comment on the verse: Vitam præsta puram… and tomorrow: Verhum carofactum est™…

Along with his preaching in the carmelites, we must mention his preaching at retreats. If the one in 1967 was not a great success, the one from August 31 to September 4, 1968, no doubt thanks to the announcement in the magazine

224 - Letter of November 23, 1969.

Itinéraires, welcomed twenty-four retreatants. Before the opening of the retreat he prayed: “May I do the work of Jesus Christ, strengthening them in the faith, giving them courage, peace and enthusiasm to strive for perfect love:

The strongest and best thing I said, it seems to me, was the primacy of prayer, the precept given by Jesus to the Christian to be separated from the world and how fidelity to this precept was the only way to work for the conversion of the world; therefore, not to be afraid of singling oneself out, for example, in costume; therefore, the spirit of martyrdom A good number will certainly have understood. In any case, Jesus blessed this retreat (and the preacher)

Father Calmel repeated the experience in 1969. The circumstances of the life of the Church brought out some harsh words in him. Before the opening of the retreat, he confided his words:

I will speak (I think) of the mystery of the redemptive Incarnation and the mystery of grace. I believe in Jesus. (…) I believe that he is our God and Savior, even and especially in times of distress and in times of pseudo-church and we are there. “There will arise false Christs (pseudo-Christs) and pseudo-prophets” and they will invent a pseudo-church, a pseudo-religion. But Jesus keeps us in the true Church founded on Peter, even if Peter has gone on vacation for a while, alas. And whoever wants, against all odds, to remain what God asks, that is to say, a witness of the true Christ, of the true Church, of the true religion, let him expect persecution and loneliness, incomprehension and mockery. But I am preparing for him a crown of glory, says the Lord

If this language strengthened and encouraged a good number of the participants, it did not please everyone. One nun “in revolution” saw fit to express her displeasure and to disrupt the retreat. For the preacher, this was just one more proof that he had been right on target.

Father Calmel’s preaching at that time was overabundant. It should not, however, make us forget the increasing fragility of his health. In June 1967, he fell ill on his return from an apostolic journey and had to stay in his room. He reassured a correspondent in these terms: “This time of

This time of forced rest does not make me so dull that I cannot pray; and then it is nothing; and what calm in this vicariate! ” j

Following the advice of his doctor and his friends, the preacher retired for a while to his daughter’s home in Gagnol, and then to the home of an elderly woman in the

former priory of Puyehevrier, near Merigny. On All Saints' Day, he had to see his doctor again for his famous nosebleeds that exhausted him, "Nothing alarming" he said then, and he promised to refuse too heavy ministries. But the fatigue and weakness remained. In March 1968, he was again taken ill. People were rightly concerned. Don't worry," he replied, "the doctor knows: very strong shortness of breath if I walk very fast with temperature changes (this is the case at the station). But do not worry, (I am reasonable)^*'. "But how to stop this son of Saint Dominic in these times of distress for the Church and for souls?

Articles of Ttinéraires

In spite of his numerous apostolic journeys, his preaching and his abundant correspondence, Father Calmel found time to continue his collaboration with the review Itinéraires and to publish articles which, because of the circumstances, were of particular importance. They allow us to follow his intellectual life during the troubled events of this period.

The maneuvers of the Antichrist

In March 1967, the Father took up again the delicate subject he had tackled in Theology of History^^K It is not the idle question of the date of the coming of the Antichrist that interests the author here, but rather that of his mode of thinking and acting. For this instrument of the devil will not be satisfied with opposing the Gospel. His strategy will consist in making this one mute. He will spread a thought that is "uninteresting and inassimilable to the spirit", so that "man's thoughts and feelings will no longer be oriented towards anything supernatural or even religious" (p. 146). And, to achieve his ends, he will call to his aid the political power and the social life, "so that the irreligion impregnates the life as necessarily, makes body with the life" (p. 147).

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Of the three strands of revolution which had been identified in Theology of History, the author retains here the third, that of the collaboration of “occultist and Masonic sects, of neo-modernism and communism” (p. 148). At this point, Father Calmel wishes to express his gratitude to two writers who had opened his eyes to this difficult subject: If various authors have shown important and undeniable aspects of revolution and communism, no one until now, at least to my knowledge, has brought out with as much perspicacity as Madiran and Cochin the irreducible character of communist or revolutionary domination, that is, the existence and the role of leading nuclei and parallel authorities. These authorities, of a special and non-legally defined type, know how to introduce themselves into the groups and into the very workings of the State in order to orient and bend them to their will (p. 154).

As the system is perfected, it becomes global. It is then that it bears all its poisoned fruits;

When it reaches the stage of globalization, the system of the ruling core and parallel authorities will become prodigiously effective in stifling souls and subverting the Church. It is undoubtedly through this system of domination, now finally global, that the very immediate preparations for the coming of the Antichrist will be made (p. 156).

When one knows the prophetic gift that Father Calmel has shown on several occasions, there is reason to be concerned.

And yet, his reflections are in no way defeatist. On the contrary, they vibrate like a call

But practically speaking, what remains within our reach? Buried as we are in the innumerable networks of statism, evolving in an environment over-saturated with secularism and neo-modernism, in a climate of veal and lust, how can we apply the pontifical program?

- Well, to go to the end of our possibilities in the fields, even the small ones, which remain in our power; to squeeze ourselves and help each other in small natural communities; communities as clearly Christian as possible, which accept a certain withdrawal from the world as an essential law of existence and of apostolate;

LnsduParti.”(p.l54)

finally persevere in prayer, so that the wings of our hope may never be broken or folded. It is in vain that Von stretches out nets under the feet of those who have wings (Pr 1:17), and those who have wings are those who pray (pp. 163-164).

Jacques Maritain

In April 1967, Father Calmel offered to his readers a study on Jacques Maritain’s U Garonne One expected, on the part of the defcnscm of the faith, a more severe criticism of the personalist philosopher. An anecdote will make understand the tone of this review. It should be remembered that it was as a Dominican, and a son of the province of Toulouse, that he collaborated with the review Itinéraires. And he was very

fond of this title. In the same way that a parish priest had to react to decadence as a parish priest, that the Dominican Sisters of the Holy Spirit or of the Holy Name of Jesus had to hold on to Tradition as constituted congregations, or even that Archbishop Lefebvre had to speak as Superior General of the Fathers of the Holy Spirit, it was as a Dominican that he wanted to preach loudly and clearly and to fight against the new. Through all these works, it was the Church of Christ and his order that drove the sellers out of the temple and gave witness to the truth. This explains why Father Calmel, in accordance with the laws in force, insisted on having his writings corrected by some censor of his province. In this case, it was Father Lavaud who took on this task.

However, after reading his criticism of Maritain, Father Lavaud sent a rather negative reply:

My study on Maritain’s Le Paysan de la Garonne made quite a fuss; Father Lavaud is old; he did not want me to say, even discreetly, that there was a part of chimera in Maritain’s thought. Madiran wrote to him to support me. In the end, my article passed with the reservations that I had (but not supported). Courage is not a frequent virtue - because charity is weak

Father Calmel therefore had to put water in his wine and smooth things over. Even in Itinéraires, he could not express himself as he wanted “3

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Obviously, filial piety played a large part in this appreciation. It was the reading of Jacques Maritain, in fact, that had enthused the young Roger Calmel for Saint Thomas Aquinas, during his final year of high school and his first years of seminary in Toulouse. He could not forget it:

My debt to Maritain is immense; it was he who introduced me to Thomism. There are certainly many of us who are indebted to him in this way; our gratitude, which is lively and deep, will always remain insufficient for such a great benefit.

This is a fine example of gratitude to a former master. But this recognition remains critical and prudent. For if Maritain's purely speculative developments introduced his pupil to Thomistic wisdom, his “numerous analyses of the historical situation” and “his views on the action of the Christian in the city” set a different tone. Father Calmel therefore proposes to “disassociate Maritain's metaphysics from his ideas on more contingent matters. We would be wrong to distance ourselves from his philosophy, which is of such a powerful and delicate realism, because we would not have found in him the same realism about the temporal. “For, from his first readings of Maritain, Roger Calmel had understood that he was “not favored with exceptional gifts in the discernment of contingencies”. This “famous new Christianity” did not inspire him much confidence, with its “divided citizens of belief” and “their peaceful cohabitation” (p. 127).

This review of Jacques Maritain's last work is joined, in the review Itinéraires, to the one given by Abbé Berto^‘L It is not useless to compare them in order to show the same delicacy of heart, but also the same accuracy of thought which inhabited the two friends.

“He’s done me too much good to say anything bad about it.

He’s done me too much harm to say good things about him. “

(…) If it were only a question of defining our own personal attitude towards M. Jacques Maritain, we would only need the first line. Perhaps the horror of ingratitude throws us into the excess of gratitude, but we are so made that we prefer to exaggerate our debts rather than to cut off a part of them. (…) In this area, the masters whose disciples we are, and those who are with us and better than us their disciples, are almost unanimously

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of the opinion that the main ideas of M. Jacques Maritain are not correct and that all his systematization is at odds (p. 64).

Father Calmel’s contribution to the July-August 1967 issue was a simple review of Jean-Marie Paupert’s book Peut-on être chrétien aujourd’hui? He took advantage of the opportunity to defend the reality of the events of the Evangilt and the miracles “‘L He took up the subject again in an article in June l%SLeClmit, Puissance de Dieu.

Father Teilhard de Chardin

In November of the same year, the theologian returned to the theses of the Jesuit Teilhard de Chardin, which he had criticized several times before the Council,

11 is interested this time in his theories on human love, which strangely resemble those of Freud 11 begins his study by quoting a long passage from a note which, already in 1947, was circulating in Toulouse :

The energy which feeds and weaves our interior life is primitively of passionate nature. Man, like any other animal, is essentially a tendency to complete union. (…) It is from this primordial impulse that develops, rises and diversifies the luxuriant complexity of the intellectual and sentimental life. (…) The idea that there exists a spiritual genesis of the spirit through the matter (the idea, in other words, of a spiritual power of the matter) overflows in its origins the problem of the chastity. (…)

It is not in isolation (married or unmarried) but in coupled units that the two male and female portions of nature must ascend to God… There is a general question of the feminine which the Christian theory of holiness has left unresolved or unexplained up to now, (,,,) To immerse oneself, in order to be lifted up and to lift up, in the flow of the created energies, without excluding the first and most burning of them. (…) Not flight (by retrenchment) but conquest (by sublimation) of the unfathomable spiritual powers still dormant under the attraction of the sexes: such are, I am more and more persuaded, the secret essence and the magnificent task to come of chastity (p. 148).

Father Calmel stood up violently against these remarks not only because of their scandalous character - the consequences of such remarks were only too apparent in the Church - but because they destroyed by the

235- “Le père Teilhard théoricien de l’amour et du féminin 117, November 1967,

The beauty and greatness of consecrated virginity, and even the pure friendship that unites the saints, were destroyed by them. According to Teilhard’s theory, which sees the spirit as a spiritualization, as a product of matter, there could be no radical chastity and pure friendship without carnal commerce, “consecrated virginity is only an attenuation, a degradation of marriage” (p. 152). To respond to such sophisms, it was best to return to common sense, for, says Father Calmel, “every suitably instructed Christian knows how to distinguish between, on the one hand, the love that tends to marriage and is completed in marriage and, on the other hand, the exclusive reservation of body and heart for the Lord God” (p. 152).

Orate, lratres

The moral aspect of the crisis was certainly enough to arouse the indignation of the right-minded. But it was not the most important thing. At the root of it all was a loss of the sense of faith, a false notion of God and a lamentable decline in love for God. The proper response to such a decadence would therefore consist first of all in a return to the primary truths of faith and to a sincere and ardent union of love with God.

This is why Father Calmel decided to deliver to the public a teaching that he had hitherto reserved for religious or for his spiritual sons and daughters. In it he expounded the great principles with which we are already familiar, that of the constant growth of union with God, of correspondence to grace, of loyalty, of the distinction of states of life;

The law of the contemplative is to look at the Lord without turning his head away and to let his life be taken by him, courageously. The law of the apostle is to look at the Lord and to learn from him to look at the souls to be saved. The

law of the apostle is also to give his life to the Lord by giving it for the souls in his care (p. 98),

11 will complete this study with a second article in issue 125 of July-August 1968. True recollection," he wrote, "is one of the primary laws of love; it is nothing other than the remembrance of the humble and adoring Beloved, the trusting and unconditional surrender to his good pleasure. "(p. 314) It is easy to understand then that such interior silence can only come from the cross: "It is fitting that the education of our love and our formation in divine morals should be accomplished in trial. (...) What the world calls the scandal of the Cross we hold to be a mystery of love. " (p. 317)

One finds in these pages the ardor and simplicity of his letters of spiritual dittc. tion. The priest of Jesus Christ opens his soul, addresses Dite directly without false shame. With Father Calmel, the theologian was irked. 1 parable of the mystic!

Give us many holy priests Among the articles that Father Calmel published in the magazine Hmérairesïœxi | époque, one of them deserves a particularly attentive reading. It is a masterpiece of its kind and sheds a strong light on the upheavals that shook the 20th century. The author shows the lessons he learned from the two great wars he suffered. While recognizing the weaknesses of Bernanos, he congratulates him for having expressed his indignation towards the "bienpensants" and the priests who, in the wake of the terrible plagues that befell humanity, had the cowardice to lend their voices to those who praised the

executioners. Caliuelen adds a third one to the first two world wars, which he calls “the subversive war”, showing the lessons he had learned from the first two.

Of these three conflicts, the author denounces, of course, those responsible, but also the mute dogs, those who should have publicly opposed the world government and atheist who held the reins of politics. It would have been a good time, after these political and social disasters, to show the world the strength of the Catholic priesthood.

After the First World War, “the worldly clergy made above all variations on perpetual peace, disarmament and social promotion” (p. 41), he praised the soldiers who died at the front for “human emancipation according to the Declaration of Human Rights” (p. 39).

Following the “other war”, that of 1939, priests with a taste for the world gradually came to want to merge the properly supernatural messianism of the kingdom which is not of this world with the revolutionary messianism of Masonry or Communism. These priests have entered into the game of Caesar who, since the revolution of 1989, aspires more than ever to substitute himself for God, to make people believe that he will eliminate the original fault and its consequences, to ensure a peace and a development which will be the whole of man. The priests who were in the mood for revolution taught with insistence

237 - “The priest in the revolution (1914-1968)”. Itineraries n” 127. i

1968, p. 37 and SV.

iat de Prouilhe

for more than twenty years that the peace of Christ is merged with political peace according to the UN and is absorbed in it (p. 42).

the subversive war, this really satanic form of war, because it intends to escape all moral rules, because it works to break the energies of the interior life by terrorism and propaganda.

At the same time, it was trying to depersonalize the professional man. The first world war, which still knew how to distinguish between civilians and combatants, which did not aspire to remodel souls, kept itself below the sacred threshold, had not attempted to cross the door of the interior life. The subversive war no longer knows any prohibition (p. 45-46).

What was, what is the reaction of the clergy to this new offensive of the devil?

The priest with a taste for the world, the “worldly” priest (…) has lowered himself to the point of becoming the man of earthly messianism. (…) 11 precipitates the revolution in the city. (…) 11 makes himself the accomplice of the modern Caesar (p. 46).

At this point, the author inks in detail:

More than one and a half million young Christians in France gave their lives between 1914 and 1918, and the priests of the world, dazed witnesses of this unprecedented slaughter, were not able to grasp its significance, to understand that, if we do not return to God, even worse scourges await us (notably subversive war) - and all the pacifist super-organizations will not stop them.

They will not have known, or will not have wanted to say, these worldly priests, that if conversion itself does not protect from wars and devastations, at least it makes these scourges bearable by uniting them to the Cross of the Redeemer. They will have heard of an abomination, unheard of until the 20th century, the communist or Nazi extermination camps, and they will not have wanted to recognize in them the punishment of God on a world that rejects God. The French State, after having done what was necessary for a century to prevent the evangelization of Algeria, will have finally, in an atrocious perjury, delivered the Algerian nation to the systematic terrorism and to the agents of the Soviets and, in front of that, priests will have done nothing else (or not much else) than to palaver over the majority of the peoples. They will have witnessed the greatest persecutions suffered by the Church since its origins and they will have remained indifferent to the testimony of the martyrs. The Virgin Mary will have taken the

The Virgin Mary will have taken the trouble to manifest herself at Fatima with an extraordinary display of marvels and they will have attached no importance to it.

They are witnessing the heretical tidal wave that has swept over the Christian people, and they continue to tell us that salvation will come to us through these national parliaments of bishops in collegiality, with the parallel authorities of commissions and sub-commissions and the new religion of heretical catechisms.

What will it take to open their eyes? What will it take for the Lord to make the priests according to the world finally realize their treachery? - For us, in any case, let our resolution be clear: to persevere in the religion of always during the long vigil in which the Lord makes us wait for his coming; to persevere especially at the hour itself of his coming when his wrath will burst forth to prepare the way for his mercy (p. 50-51).

At the end of this analysis, Father Calmel makes a magnificent profession of faith in the sanctity and virtues of the Catholic priesthood:

Priests of the Lord, we do not have to apologize for being not only men apart as every Christian must be, but also for being Christians apart in the midst of Christians: we do not have to be forgiven for being above all men of the Eucharist because we do not have to be forgiven by the Lord Jesus for having constituted and “ordained” us as we are: we do not have to make ourselves accepted by accepting the compromises that the world hopes for, because we have the mission to announce the true Gospel and not a “rectified faith” as Teilhard said =’*, and because the acceptance of the Gospel depends on almighty grace (and our fidelity) and not on the lies of men. The faithful priest is the first and only impassable dam where Caesar’s claim to replace the true God can be broken. The faithful priest by the virtue of the Gospel which he transmits according to the Church, by the efficacy of the sacrifice which he offers in a pure liturgy is the invincible refutation of the allegations of the false prophets: “Caesar is already God: the development of the world is already eternity: the new horizons which Caesar contemplates do not frighten us in the least, for they were already ours, but we had not yet understood it. “

e. Seuil. Paris, p. 349.

The faithful priest is the living refutation of all these official lies, sometimes lies in arms, because he is the minister of the holy and infallible Church; drawn from the midst of Christians, he is ordained to the things of God: to offer the holy sacrifice, to preach, to give the sacraments. Without illusions about the world and Caesar, about their tricks and cunning, he has no doubt that if the world has received the Lord, it will receive his minister, and if it has persecuted its Lord, how would it be better treated? Accomplishing the proper work of the Church, he also favors the restoration of a just city, a city according to the laws of Christian honor. He is the humble servant of the immaculate Mother of the only Priest: she who crushes the head of the Serpent and is victorious in all the battles of God (p. 56).

Such a statement reveals the deeply priestly soul of its author. It is a magnificent program of life for the priests of our time. How could it not inspire vocations in the terrible trials of the Church today?

Finally, let us mention a text that closes this period*. Father Calmel took the opportunity of an article by Father Cardonnel in the Témoignage chrétien of April 3, 1969, to send an open letter to his former confrere of the Montpellier convent. The latter affirmed and explained a proposition that sums up very well the modernist thinking on Christ: “Jesus Christ is God through a unique way of being human. “The chronicler of itineraries makes a profound theological defense of the divinity of Christ. Everything is there, in fact, such is the fundamental truth aimed at by all the novelties

that would like to suffocate the Church and that ruin the world.

The spiritual master

The writings and oral preaching of Father Calmel should not make us forget his priestly ministry to the many people who confided in him. The impression that the Dominican left at the first contact is very well summarized by a lady who participated in the retreat that he preached in Prouilhe in August 1968:

11 arrived like a transparent shadow in his white dress, ascetic but without rigor, and giving off a reassuring light. (…)

The contacts with him were perfectly simple. I had with him

1 Father Cardonnel", Itinéraires n" 137. noven

I had the impression of mutual trust and immediate understanding.

His advice was also very simple: his spiritual authority was all tact and prudence (cardinal); his judgments had a mischievous twist in his great gentleness. (…) With him, confession was so simple (…) His remarks were enlightening on everything;

In order to understand Father Calmel's relationship with souls, to surprise him, so to speak, in the exercise of his spiritual paternity, nothing will be more effective than to interview some of them. With the permission of the interested parties, we are going to follow Father Calmel in his direction with two young girls. The examples are

deliberately chosen because, at first sight, these people were not at all disposed to embrace the Tradition that the Dominican represented.

Germaine came from a family that had followed and even anticipated the innovative trend in the Church. We received at home the vicar general of the diocese, we read the magazines Esprit and Témoignage chrétien, we were infatuated with Teilhard de Chardin and the “mass on the world”, we followed the movements of Catholic Action, the JEC in particular, in their drift. Having lost this orientation, Germaine was enrolled by her parents in 1959 at the Dominican Sisters of the Holy Name of Jesus, at the school of the Annunciation, where she discovered a new world.

It was not until her senior year, April 20, 1967, that she met Father Calmtl for the first time. She had befriended Agnes, the daughter of a good friend of Father Calmtl’s, and was invited by her on one of his visits. Germaine witnessed the arrival of the man who would change her life. As usual, he had traveled from Prouilhe by hitchhiking (“God will provide” he liked to say). The young girl was struck by the simplicity of the priest whom she knew only by reputation and whom she feared a little. Calmel said to her at once: “It would be best to begin with a confession. “11 spoke to her simply but directly: “My daughter, the blood of Jesus will wash your soul. (…)

11 must convert you… You must change… “Then he made her kiss the crucifix. At the end of the conversation, the Father announced to her: “I am going to subscribe you to Itineraries. “U offered him his book Theology of History with the following dedication:

For Germaine, these pages written in the light of faith, for the dark days in which we have entered, so that we may

continue to “hope against all hope” and to fight for the love of the Lord, in Our Lady of the Hallelujah, with all our hearts, R.-Th. Calmel.

240 - Utters of a rciraitancc of August 30 and November 26, 2007.

The vicarage of Prouilhe

As soon as he returned to Prouilhe, Father Calmel wrote to the young girl and sent her the April issue of Itinéraires as well as the reference of some of his ‘rrieles (on Antichrist, March 1967. on secret societies, July 1966 to poposdr Charles Maurras. June 1966).

Above all, let us be absolutely certain that the grace of Jesus gives us the power to overcome. And let us bless Jesus for loving us enough to ask everything of us, for wanting us to be so close to him that he does not hesitate to call us to love him without measure “*.

The good shepherd will not forget the lost sheep. 11 wrote to him again on July 4, 1967, complaining that he had not heard from him and inviting him to come to Prouilhe and even to participate in the little retreat he preached there from July 1 to 4. And he concluded: “Courage. Let us pray enough to know from experience that Jesus cannot abandon us and that he is victorious. I entrust you to Our Lady. “

Germaine confided to Father Calmel the reticence she still had with regard to the fight for Tradition, in particular with regard to Itinéraires. Father Calmel’s reply is both a record of his spiritual direction of young people and an apology for Jean Madiran’s review and for practical resistance to modernism. In this double capacity, it is precious for making us understand the Dominican’s way of being and acting: “Pray,” he said by way of introduction, “that the light I will

try to give you will not harm you; on the contrary, it will become a principle of life and peace. “

Then, she must rise above the conditions of people, disregard the shortcomings of men in order to grasp what they can bring her. Now the great merit of the writings £ Itineraries is to preserve her “from being the victim of the false authorities sociologically installed”.

In the 26 years that I have been a priest, I have seen relentlessly - the elimination of the teaching of Thomism - the reformation of all dogmas in spite of the clear encyclical of Pius XII of 1950 (Humani generis) - the spread of the most immoral morality - the prevention of the publication of almost all the clerics who, without being incomprehensible and sectarian, held the tradition of the true faith - in short, in 26 years. I have seen the work of felsifying Christianity pursued with such tenacity and precision that I would be a fool if I denied the existence of sociologically installed dissolving parallel authorities, i.e., with power

212 ■ Letter of August 20, 1967, “The Gospel Sunday of the Lilies of the Field”

effective (and usurped) in leadership positions: journals (including , religious journals); press: congresses; sessions; Catholic institutes; commission of this or that.

Well, Madiran has seen this and helps you to see it. Is it not therefore nothing? Or an implacable logic, and sometimes even a scathing one, “which would make you cringe! in the place of the victim (or of the guilty party…)” is often the only effective way to “dislodge (if only a little) the well

embedded traitors The traitors exist, Germaine. You can’t unmask them with exhortations

From the test, the review Itinéraires was able to fulfill its high mission of defense of the truth precisely “because it was feared enough by the traitors not to be stifled. A journal that would not be feared would never publish the studies I have begun. “

The spiritual director then comes to political questions, against the sophistical distinction of “right” and “left”, he reminds us of the principles of “Christian political philosophy”, and the existence of “just and Christian political institutions which are also not matters of option: for example - school freedom for parents against state monopoly; - or free management of rural property against state control; - or property in general; - or the right to pass on one’s inheritance without it being confiscated by the state. “Such common-sense statements are no doubt enough to be labelled “right-wing and nostalgic for privileges

liturgical upheaval. Communion without confession and in an infamous state of disarray, is this perhaps what adult faith is all about? “

Father Calmel shows great understanding for the troubles of the young woman from Toulouse. Beyond the education she had received and her own inexperience, the spiritual director sees a much deeper problem: The substance of your letter, Germaine; you are bumping up against the mystery of evil; its organization which you perhaps do not dare (yet) to believe as such; the hardness of the fight; the very limits of the Pope who is not impeccable, nor in all things infallible,

even if he is assisted in defending the faith. Well, Germaine, you will remain strong and calm, even in the face of the mystery of evil, if you have great faith in the Lord Jesus. “I have overcome the world,” he says; and again; “All power has been given to me”: and again: “My sheep no man shall take from my hand”; and again: “I will give you the Comforter whom the world cannot receive, that he may abide with you forever. “

My daughter, when one knows this from the depths of one’s soul, there is no need to delude oneself about the perversity of the world in which one is - including the ecclesiastical world. One knows that the Prince of this world is already defeated. We hold on; we fight: we are at peace; we do not let ourselves be moved by all those who want to disarm us by trying to make us feel bad about ourselves…

My daughter, I wish you theological confidence and love (without which faith is dead), without which we break against evil (or we live in illusions), instead of growing in true love through “the mystery of iniquity”. And I pray for you, Our Lady, with all my heart as a priest. (…) Do you say the Rosary every day? Consecrate yourself, my daughter, to the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

Germaine’s desire to become a religious was quickly born. But when she spoke to her parents about it, there was a general outcry. It was out of the question for a daughter of the house to enter the Dominican Sisters of the Holy Name of Jesus. They forced her to study to get this incongruous idea out of her head. So she entered a nursing school.

Thanks to the support and guidance of Father Calmel, these two years were to be very profitable for her. She testifies: “He showed me untiring patience, answered all my letters and was always ready to help. He had great mercy and was

very forgiving of deviations. He was approachable by everyone and was at ease with everyone. He always kept his rocky and rustic aspect of the Lot-et-Garonne peasant, but it never bothered me. Always very humble, he was able to come back to me with a smile.

Father Roger-Thomas Calmel

on a judgment. For example, he had praised the letter of the Abbé de Nmi" j Then he went back on his thinking after reading a very critical issue. He understood the situations, was right and had a distant view of the const. j quences. On the one hand, he was quite "modern," advocating a change in the Church, but not the upheaval of today. There was something prophetic in what he said. When we met him at friends' houses, after the meal, we went back to the fight. "

From time to time, this young girl came to visit him in Prouilhe. Today, I will speak to you about the Holy Virgin" or "about the mass..." During a visit, she began a prayer with a sign of the Cross, a little furtive. "During a visit, she began a prayer with a sign of the Cross, a little furtive. 11 stopped her immediately: "No, the sign of the Cross is sacred! Do it again after me. "

Since spiritual direction consists above all in guiding souls in the ways of prayer, Father Calmel attached great importance to prayer. But yes, my daughter Germaine, persevere in the rosary - frequent Holy Communion - prayer. Prayer is a conversation of love, alone with the Lord; it is the expression (often silent) of our faith, our hope, our charity, our contrition and adoration.

Surely during the day you have lights, or impulses that you perceive as coming from Jesus. Let these lights penetrate you in prayer; persevere in silence. "Mary kept in her heart

the words and actions of Jesus Christ; she repeated them in her heart” (Le 2,19 and 51). May she obtain for you to do the same.

During the day, my daughter, every thought that comes back to you: discouragement, self-love, vanity, unreasoning fear, sensuality, in short, every thought outside of Jesus, be faithful to put it aside, so that it is not with you, but remains attentive to Jesus”.

Another front awaited Father Calmel’s paternal care of this young girl educated in a liberal environment, that of dress. At the age of eighteen, these considerations seem so minor! What is the point of being embarrassed and singled out for matters that are more a matter of social propriety? And what does clothing have to do with the life of prayer? Delicately, by successive touches, the spiritual director invited his daughter to reflect. In a private conversation in 1968, he addressed the question of froni. Here are the notes taken by the interested party:

A woman who puts herself in pants has no bad intention, sure not to exceed limits (decency…).

However, it is necessary to go beyond subjective intentions (good…) and to consider things from the bottom up, in themselves. There is a difference between man and woman, as intended by the Creator. God “established man and woman” with their respective qualities for a particular mission. Even if men are nowadays baby-sitters and dishwashers, it would be abnormal for a man to run the house for a lifetime while his wife would be a lawyer or a police inspector! Their mission is different and it is against the nature of things to switch.

The clothing is the visible sign, the public symbol of a different nature. The feminine costume, more colorful, more graceful until our century, collaborated to make the girl, the mother, the wife, a graceful and reserved being, to whom the eyes turn not because she is an object of covetousness but because she is the queen of the home, the indispensable presence so that the house is joyful and reassuring. The distinctive feminine dress (whatever it is according to civilizations) is according to the order and nature of things because it is different from the man's. Dressing like boys for a girl is not just a matter of fashion or ease of movement, which is what it is now attributed to (and other low-level reasons). The deep reasons of those who launched this current little by little are the same ones that animate the feminist movements since the first world war: "The woman is liberated, it is not only a question for her to confine herself in a "subaltern" and effaced role… She can claim the same place as the man in society… "

The visible sign to be adopted by these new generations, the symbol, is the fact that they no longer wear distinctive clothes. They can enjoy the same freedoms as boys. More reserve, more modesty in their attitude. The qualities that normally protect, respect, naturally arouse respect and esteem for that which is linked to the mystery of life are ridiculed, despised as outdated and used.

It is in this inversion of the values, in this refusal to carry the mark of a different nature that it is necessary to locate the problem of the pants: it is part of a whole: the continuous, cultural revolution which puts down the traditional values of the family. Pants, slit skirts, low-cut dresses, culottes, miniskirts - not to mention the

indecent -, everything contributes, either by the masculinization of the dress, or by its indecency (more suggestive than real most often), to make of the woman an object of covetousness or to destitute her of her role of mother or wife - queen of the family.

The masculine dress is, to the same degree as the indecent dress, an offense to God the Creator; in the second case, it is to incite the man to lust; in the first case, it is to establish oneself on another level than the feminine one, to put in the shade all that is the prerogative of the woman and to equip oneself with the man.

How is it that we do not feel the equivocation of this situation? Let's transpose; what would happen if men, suddenly complexed, ape women? The unnatural ridiculousness would jump to the eyes and for the moment the effeminate ones did not succeed in imposing themselves. It is to say that there is by the original sin of the natural inclinations to distort the nature of the things.

The agents, continuous destroyers of Christian values, have not taken a hundred years to "kill" in women the respect, the esteem of their own nature, of their body which is the depository of it. What in her is a treasure, this capacity to give life, to be mother of bodies but also of hearts and souls, has been relegated to the last place and the woman has believed to grow up by attaching importance only to her intelligence, her social qualities... She has been denatured, debased, diverted from her own mission and order and harmony no longer exist in our societies. As long as the woman does not put the order willed by the Creator in her, does not inspire it around her, it is not possible to claim a better society.

We must have the courage to resist fashion, to resist certain practical advantages, so as not to give our support to a secular state of mind, against God and against his law written in our hearts.

If Christian women, Christian girls, are not the first to bear witness to authentically Christian values, who can we count on? There is a witness to be borne through one's clothing, one's dress… and to evade it is a guilty omission - moreover the witness of the word is vain, if the example, the conformity of the acts do not bear the mark of Christian virtues. Think about this before the Blessed Virgin and you will see your cowardice - Do not be unaware, see the intentions.

The answer to this question was to be found in God, "in the holy will of God. The Creator made us body and soul so that

That's why the Father couldn't stand the little groups where we stayed in the warmth of a privileged environment. The truth had to flow from a spring. However, he encouraged many to participate in the Lausanne congresses where one could be trained and armed to act better. "There you will meet upright people. "

In those same years, a meeting of the A.P.E.L. (Association des Parents de l'Enseignement Libre) took place in Toulouse on the subject of changes in free education. Father Calmel and Mr. Vernette came in person to pick up the young girl at the station to ask her to intervene. "Father Calmel and Mr. Vernette came to pick up the girl at the station and asked her to speak. "The girl apologized, saying that she was not eloquent. She apologized, saying that she was not eloquent. "We will prepare a text for you".

In 1968, Father Calmel sent Germaine and one of her friends to a meeting on vocation organized by the bishops of Toulouse and Pamiers. The meeting was held at the Mirail, at the Dominican house. Germaine arrived late. She knocked on the door. A man dressed in civilian clothes opened it for her and introduced himself in a light and demagogic manner: it was the bishop of Pamiers! This was a great lesson for the young girl about the real situation of the Church. On her return, Germaine told Father Calmel about this distressing meeting. He exclaimed, “How can God bear this? But the Church, it is the good God who holds it. “

At the end of her two years of study and preparation, the young girl was able to fulfill her great desire and enter the novitiate of the Dominican Sisters of the Holy Name of Jesus. Her spiritual father wrote her these last words of advice and encouragement:

Blessed be God, my dearest daughter. Enter with confidence, humility, gratitude, courage. He whose bride you will become only desires to do wonders in our souls. The closer we live to him, in his light, the more we will be able to give souls the only

light that saves them, thus preserving their aspirations and their generativity from being hijacked, confiscated, distorted by the false prophets of the pseudo-church (hidden in the true and only one).

Holding the Tradition that does not begin at Vatican II. To pray”,.

The same firmness and patience of the priest appeared in the case of Magali, a lay teacher in one of the schools of the Dominican Sisters of the Holy Name of Jesus, where she worked for eight years. The first meeting took place in Prouilhe. Magali had been persuaded to follow the Dominican retreat. She arrived at the wheel of her 2CV, with a bob on her head, 11 larcgat da, welcomed him kindly, with an air that seemed to mean: “There is work. With him,” she testifies, “I perceived what a true preut was. Father Calmel was kind and patient. However, he was strict about the dress code of the ladies. One day when he saw her wearing a skirt that was too short, he told her, “One day you will have a long dress to cover your long legs! On June 4, 1969, he wrote to her on this subject: “Put an end to the softness of the dress: big or small, I don’t care. A girl who is in the Lordse

The young lady soon realized who she was dealing with. At his house,” she said, “the good Lord was always there. You never had any contact with him unless it was with God. He always led us higher. As far as the crisis in the Church was concerned, I didn’t understand anything about it. I was even very reticent towards Tradition and I attended the modernist church. Father Calmel enlightened me a lot. Especially since I had sad examples of people who had lost their faith (or of unfaithful priests). What he explained to me corresponded exactly to what the mothers were telling me. I wrote to him every month, both about my vocation and about doctrinal questions. I asked him all sorts of questions and objections about what he was telling me. He always answered. I would leave a margin for him to answer directly. “

The tone of his letters was sometimes lively, but one understood very quickly that he was a

truth that is hard - don’t be timid - hesitant - maybe a little cowardly

For me,” she continues, “he was always transparent, he did not stop me from him, but he always put me before the good God. 11 achieved in me a complete recovery. “

Father Calmcl’s leadership was prudent. If he did not hesitate to lead souls to the heights of the interior life, and for that to require of them a radical break with the mores of the world, he did not neglect good and simple practices, such as the recitation of the Angelus, the meditation of the rosary, prayers before and after meals, pilgrimages and other works of devotion. He expressed himself on this subject:

The danger of routine is little compared to the advantage (in a willing soul) of being available; this availability is increased by regular practice. The day will come when the Lord Jesus will have lifted (and removed) that soul far beyond the ruts in which it now wades. Many souls would have become contemplative if they had persevered in the humble path of necessary mortifications.

If they had done so, they would have been present the day Jesus came to visit them and knocked on the door. He came by. He knocked.

But how to open: they were so far away; only the humble practices would have kept them applied and attentive™.

The simplicity of his reports touched souls. At the beginning of 1969, Father Calmel had to make a forced stay in Toulon because of a hepatitis from which he almost died. Because of his illness, he was moved to the same house where Magali was living. One day, he tapped against the wall and called her: “Magali, come five minutes. “The interested party was

seized with panic! She did it all the same. When she arrived in his office, he asked her: “I would absolutely like to learn this prayer from the missal. I’m too tired, I can’t do it. Tell it to me sentence by sentence. “He was in the habit of learning something by heart every day.

When Magali decided to enter in religion, Father Calmel supported her a lot to overcome the attacks of her family. At the time of her entry into the convent, Father Calmel wrote her a letter which summarizes very well the seriousness and the simplicity of his direction. Alluding to the bold conduct of the young girl, he told her:

245 - Lcccrc of March 25

1969.

1967.

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Father Roger-Thomas Calmel

When there is some congestion on the road, you can meow a little (as in a 2CV) but above all do not dramatize anything and pray, and the way will become free again. May the Virgin of Carmel, my daughter, and little Theresa give you to Saint Dominic - in this time of apostasy and victory.

Then, just after his entry into the postulancy, he invited his daughter to go on a trip:

Come on, little Dominican sister teacher, enter quickly into the silence and peace of the Lord with Our Lady. May your soul quickly become that great peaceful lake, that vast quiet sheet where the Beloved is always free to come and go on the boat of his love.

The vise is loosening

The many souls who benefited from the advice or direction of Father Calmel made the Dominican Sisters of the Holy Name of Jesus jealous, so to speak. For about ten years, in fact, he had been forbidden to do any preaching or to have any regular contact. Mother Helene Janitt was an exception because of her position in the congregation. She appreciated this gift of Providence. Let us pray together," wrote one of Fr Calmel's spiritual daughters, "to obtain for

each other enough active docility to the grace of God to live this precious direction.” j Was this spiritual and doctrinal support, so useful in the troubled times of the Elixir, to remain the privilege of a few chosen souls? God listened to the prayer of Father Calmel and his daughters, and soon the situation changed.

During his visits to Toulouse or to the region, the Dominican did not hesitate to meet this or that sister, thus taking advantage of the indulgence of the sisters. On March 19, 1967, it was Mother Marie-Charles, then on March 29, Mother Hélène accompanied by a sister. On May 3, it was the turn of Mother Marit Luc - “courageous in defending her free school of the Annunciation - but still quite alone. On June 22 of the same year, overcome by a high fever, Father Calmel was taken to Prouilhe by Mother Hélène Jamci, Mother Marie-François Dupouy and another sister. As we can see, the

At the beginning of the summer of 1967, an event took place that was to have a great influence on the following: The Dominican Sisters of the Holy Name of Jesus were to elect a new Mother General. Father Calmel entrusted this important intention not only to the Blessed Virgin, but also to a little Genevieve, a second year student at the Annunciation, who had always thought of joining the sisters and who had recently died in great peace. On July 8, Father Anne-Marie Simoulin was elected.

This choice was a relief and an encouragement for the Sisters attached to Tradition. Father Calmel was very happy about it. I told you about the election of dear Sister Anne-

Marie," he wrote, "and that Sister Marie-Luc is one of the assistants…" But he could see at once the worries that awaited them: "Poor little girls. Let us pray for them. The new General was indeed taking over the leadership of a congregation that was, if not divided, at least exposed to very diverse influences. Her first battleground was to be that of the freedom of Christian teaching, and therefore the refusal of the "school map" and the influence of the committees of Catholic Education.

In September, Father Calmel was able to meet the new Mother General accompanied by her first assistant. A meeting of prioresses, to which Mother Hélène was invited, showed in October the determination of many "to refuse to turn with the wind".

In 1968, Father Calmel was able to meet with Mother Hélène during her trips to Toulouse. "We will help each other," he wrote to her on April 10. Then he met again with Mother Anne-Marie Simoulin and Mother Marie-Luc. That same year, Mother Marie-Jean Sénacq was named mistress of novices. With the permission of her superiors, she was able to visit Father Calmel in Prouilhe, but in secret. They talked about many topics related to the spiritual direction of the novices.

The year 1969 was to be a turning point in her relationship with her beloved Dominican sisters.

On May 6, 1968, Father Marie-Joseph Nicolas, religious assistant of the Congregation of the Holy Name of Jesus, had made a request to Rome for a normalization of Father Calmel's situation. On June 23, 1969, Mother Anne-Marie Simoulin herself wrote strongly to this effect.

Accompanied by the prayers of many, these requests were granted, at least in part. On July 9, Cardinal Antoniutti, Prefect of the Congregation for Religious, wrote simultaneously to Father Nicolai and to Mother General of his decision to “modify the decision taken previously” (in 1954). In a letter dated August 15, Father Nicolai informed the Dominican sisters of the exact verdict of Rome: “The decisions of the 1954 visit remain in force, but as regards personal relations with the nuns (letters, visiting rooms) no particular rule is taken. “Nicolas commented: “In favor of Father Calmel, it was a return to common law, that is to say, to freedom in all that concerns correspondence and individual visits.

In his letter of thanks to Father Nicholas, Father Calmel wrote; “May it be for more love. “

Certainly, the situation was not yet ideal. Father Calmel could not preach publicly in the houses of the Dominican Sisters of the Holy Name of Jesus, and resistance remained among some sisters attached to modern ideas. If a nun had the joy of meeting him, she was warned: “Do not go and say in community that you have seen Father Calmel. “For many, Father Calmel remained persona nongrata and those who went to see him were considered suspect. However, he now had a much greater opportunity to help the sisters and to resume spiritual direction. After this news, he wrote: “We thank the Virgin Mary so much! After fifteen years, the stranglehold is loosened. From now on, “with the sisters of Mother Helene, it’s so much better - even though I don’t have the right to preach to them. At least they pass through here freely.

One of the Dominican teachers, who entered the congregation in 1954, knew Father Calmel only by hearsay or through his writings. She was able to meet him only

through the events of the summer of 1969. Following their first meeting, she recounts: “I discovered him to be simple, humble, physically fragile, but with a remarkable intellectual strength. A contemplative. He had a very realistic vision of what was happening. He could see things coming. “

In the immediate future, it was the new novice mistress who benefited the most from the new freedoms granted to Father Calmel. Thanks to her notes

taken in the course of the interviews, it is easy to grasp as if on the fly the conception of religious life and of the formation of novices which inhabited the Dominican: Under authoritarian and possessive superiors, let the novices guard against all servility, acting out of fear or interest, acting out of arrivism.

To remain free of oneself and of others.

Here are some very serious attitudes for a nun: flattery - grovelling - fear of trouble - cockroach to make herself

Avoid the following two pitfalls: A freedom of spirit without freedom of

or little spirit and little character.

Some examples of impurity:

- Greed is an acquired impurity (exaggerated order and economy)

- Outrageous honor, leading to a hateful contempt that would not be the right contempt, imbued with mercy.

-The passion to serve: an afterthought to dominate.

- Unspoken feelings, jealousies.

The solitude of the heart is heavier than the solitude of the body.

Do not surf, do not embellish”.

Don’t overdo it at the novitiate, even at the postulancy. You have to see where the girls are coming from now.

To be rather severe to receive in the novitiate.

When you are being trained, you have to believe and trust.

When one has to form, one must believe, trust and prevent the frost and the wind from destroying the young faithful shoots Beyond the advice of spiritual direction, Father Calmel made pastel to the sisters his love of truth and Tradition, his sense of the Church, his authentically Dominican spirit, his vigilance against modern errors™. In 1969, a few months before the promulgation of the new Mass and the serious conflicts that would ensue, this newfound freedom of Father Calmel was a gift of Providence to the congregation.

21

The Liturgical Revolution

The crisis in the Church was to enter a new and particularly painful phase following the promulgation of the Novtts Ordo mhsie by Pope Paul VI,

The warning signs

The first constitution promulgated by the Second Vatican Council, on November 4, 1962, had to do with the liturgy. The great principles which were soon to govern the changes in worship were already expressed. It was said that the liturgy should be adapted to the needs of each age, that it should facilitate ecumenism and encourage the participation of the faithful. For this, it was said, a reform of the liturgy should be advocated “as soon as possible”.

Pope Paul VI’s first encyclical, Ecclesiam suam, of August 6, 1964, alluded to the desired changes and gave the profound intention; “On many points which differ from us, in tradition, spirituality, canonical laws, and worship, we are ready to study how to respond to the legitimate desires of our Christian brethren, who are still separated from us”. “

For his part, Annibalc Bugnini, the main architect of the liturgical reform, confessed its primary purpose. It should remove “any stone which might constitute even a shadow of a risk of stumbling or of

It should remove “any stone that might constitute even a shadow of a risk of stumbling or displeasure” to “our separated brethren”. The intention of the reformers was

all that of ecumenism

From the publication of the conciliar scheme, the liturgical reform was deducted like an avalanche. More and more space was given to the vanacular language, the altars were

turned to the people, the statues were removed and the sanctuaries were transformed.

In 1965, Father Calmel was the victim of this mania for change. Since he was replacing a parish priest at Sunday Mass, he had to adapt to the already established customs. He wrote his impressions:

To obey him and not to confuse his parishioners again, on Sundays in the parish I say “have mercy” and all their other ridiculous translations… But after all, it’s only on Sundays and in the parish. What do you want? They’ve been brainwashed by these poor parish priests

The news that Father Calmel received from Gagnol was not very cheerful. The upheavals that troubled this small parish in Lot-et-Garonne were a small image of what was happening in the whole of France; the clergy was removing statues, turning altars upside down and deforming shrines. In his letters to his son, the good Christian that Matthieu Calmel was shows how much his heart was bruised by this.

But if the parishes and bishoprics were in a state of upheaval, there was no lack of activity in Rome either. The committee for the application of the conciliar constitution on the liturgy drew up a “normal Mass”, a sketch of what would soon be the new Mass. It was presented to the bishops’ node on October 26, 1967. However, out of a total of 187 voters, there were 43 nonplacets (outright refusal), 62 juxta modum (acceptance with substantial changes) and 4 abstentions. This meant a general refusal. Nevertheless, this “normative Mass” was imposed on the entire Church two years later, with a few minor changes. Similarly, communion in the hand, on March 12, 1969, was accepted by only 567 of the 2136 bishops consulted. In France, moreover, they had not waited for the instructions from Rome. As early as July 1968,

the French Episcopal Conference authorized communion in the hand.

Father Calmcl, for his part, did not let himself be impressed by these successive decrees and invited the faithful to resist. In their parishes, they had to remain firmly attached to the ancestral custom of the Church, no matter what pressure their parish priest put on them. If the sermons contained heresies, they had to leave the church. The rite of mass remained the same as in 1962, but the profanity was gaining ground. In Prouilhe, Father Calmel’s fidelity was a source of tension. Some sisters protested against this priest who stubbornly refused to distribute Holy Communion in the hand.

There was no shortage of prelates, priests and laymen who opposed this radical change in the liturgy. Perhaps one of the most remarkable is the stigmatized Capuchin of Calabria. Padre Pio (1887-1968) did not know the definitive version of the Novus Ordo, but he had a foretaste of it through the liturgical experiments that began in 1964. On two occasions, Padre Pio expressed his rejection of these changes and explicitly asked permission to remain faithful, no matter what, to the Mass of his ordination. On Holy Thursday, April 3, 1969, Pope Paul VI published the apostolic constitution Missale Romanum.

New mass

The reading of the new rite of the Mass threw many bishops, priests and laity into deep consternation. The deliberate omission of eternal truths about God and his works, the abolition of most of the external signs of worship, the

theological poverty of the new expressions, the confusion between the ministerial priesthood of the priest and the participation of the faithful, everything was done to dilute Catholic truth, beginning with the reality of the propitiatory sacrifice of the altar, in a pious but inconsistent verbiage.

LInstitutiogeneralis (General Introduction) set the tone and made clear the intention of the legislators. In its paragraph 7, it defined the Mass as follows: “The Lord’s Supper or Mass is the sacred synaxis or gathering of the people of God under the presidency of the priest to celebrate the memorial of the Lord. This is why it is eminently worthwhile

260 - During a conference in Dijon on January 4, 1969, Father Calmcl already spoke of these Masses

261 ■ h Yves Chiron, Padre Pio, U sti^natisé, Perrin. 2002, p. 313. In a private letter, Father Calmcl once wrote of his admiration for Padre Pio: “I like the Padre. {…) I believe he is a saint. May he intercede for you and for me! He is a saint and a great saint. “(Letter from

for the local gathering of the holy Church the promise of Christ; “Where two or three are gathered in my name, there are two of me” (Mt 18,20).

The perplexity of all was increased by the fact that this new liturgy explicitly presented itself as evolutionary. It only claimed to be a step in the evolution of the liturgy and to leave it to the initiative of all® and which posed this reform as a radical break with the traditional liturgy of the Church. Father Calmel was from the outset very sensitive to this aspect of the reform; one must be either foolish or fearful (or both) to consider oneself bound in conscience by liturgical and other laws which change more often than the fashion of the ladies and which are even more uncertain.

A courageous reaction caused a sensation in Rome. Cardinals Ottaviani and Bacci published a strong protest, the Brief Critical Examination of the New Ordo Misse, which expressed the indignation of many bishops and priests: “The new Ordo Misse departs impressively, both as a whole and in detail, from the Catholic theology of the Holy Mass as formulated at the twenty-second session of the Council of Trent. “The criticism came from on high, since Cardinal Ottaviani had been prefect of the Holy Office (now the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith).

The text was composed by a group of theologians who met once a week in the evening in Rome during the months of April and May 1969. It was completed by Corpus Christi, June 5, 1969, and given to Canon Ottaviani and Canon

Bacci, who studied it carefully, signed it and gave it to the Pope. The French text was published in the magazine Itinéraires n. 141 of March 1970, p. 212 and following. Other complaints were sent to Romt from all over the world.

If, at least, one had been content with a trial, a mass ad experimnilim, leaving each priest the possibility of keeping the rite of his ordination… Such was the dream of Father Calmel;

I only want to ask him (St. Dominic) one thing: that the Pope tolerate that the faithful priests keep to the old rite of the Mass. The new Ordo made by Paul VI (…) is certainly not heretical, but it leads little by little to the Protestant Supper… If the Pope

262. See the explicit statements of Father Bugnini in the Acts of the Sacred Congregation for Divine Worship (Nolitùe 10/1974 and Osservatare Romana of April 10, 1974).

who celebrate the Mass sine populo (if it is difficult to get used to the new s of the Roman missal and the Ordo lec

Father Roger-Thomas Calmel

In Italy, the new Ordo was made obligatory as of November 30, 1969. In its ordinance of November 14, 1969, "The French episcopate decided: Article 1: The use of the new Sunday lectionary is authorized from the first Sunday of Advent, November 30, 1969. It will be obligatory from January 1, 1970, except for the particular cases provided for in articles 10 and 11 below. The serious and motivated objections against the new Ordo which were pouring in from Rome did not leave the authorities indifferent. During the course of the general conferences, Pope Paul VI visibly tried to defend his liturgical œum.

On November 19, 1969, he expressed himself in an obviously embarrassed style: “This imminent reform, therefore, responds to an official mandate from the Church; it is an act of obedience. (…) It is not a temporary or optional experiment; it is not an improvisation by some dilettante. It is a law worked out by eminent liturgists after long discussion and study. (…)

Some may be impressed by this or that sidebar, as if it constituted or concealed an alteration or minimization of definitive or duly sanctioned truths of the Catholic faith; as if it compromised the equation (ex orandi - lex credendi (law of prayer - law of faith). But this is absolutely not the case. First of all, because the rite and the corresponding rubric are not, in themselves, a dogmatic definition. They can have theological qualifications of different values according to the liturgical context to which they refer; they are gestures and words applied to a lived religious action, living of an inexpressible mystery of divine presence, and which is not always realized in a univocal form. (…)

Let us not speak of a “new Mass” but of a “new era”.

266 - General Audience of Pope Paul VI, November 19, 1969 / December 7, 1969, p. 1055.

Such a retreat into the argument of authority was an admission of weakness. In other words, “The new Mass is the Council. The Council is the Holy Spirit. Obey. “But here the Pope was putting his finger on the main difficulty of his reform. For this reform was not criticized, apart from the general introduction, as a doctrinal text, but as a liturgical rite, as a body of words, gestures, silences, which express an invisible reality. Now the traditional rite is the adequate rite,

having reached a canonized perfection, shaped by centuries of faith and holiness, of the sacrifice realized by Christ in his minister, the priest. A rite is not asked to be a dogmatic definition, but to be a clear and holy sign of the propitiatory sacrifice. This will be the basis of Father Calmel's argument against the new Ordo missa.

The finale of Pope Paul VL's speech is in itself a whole program, and a superior argument for rejecting the new Mass. It is evolutionary, it expresses the thought of an era and must soon disappear.

On November 20, 1969, the Osservatore Romano published an account, composed by Father Bugnini, Secretary of the Congregation for Divine Worship, of the XII Plenary Session of the Special Commission for Liturgical Reform. The Fathers took into consideration some difficulties that have recently arisen concerning certain points of the Institutio generalis of the Roman Missal. They recalled that this general presentation is not a dogmatic text, but purely and simply an exposition of the norms governing the celebration of the Eucharist; it is not intended to give a definition of the Mass, but simply a description of the rites.

In a second general audience, Pope Paul VI returned to the subject, emphasizing the new, even shocking, character of the rite of the previous April 3:

This novelty that constitutes the new rite of the Mass. (…) This is a change that affects a venerable, centuries-old tradition, and therefore our hereditary religious patrimony, which seemed to have to remain intangible, unchanging, to make us repeat the same prayers as our ancestors and saints, to give us the comfort of fidelity to our spiritual past, which we would then update and pass on to the next generations. (…) We can point out that this

Vfi-In Documentation calholiqiien^ 1552.7 December I969,p. 1055. note 1.

271 - General Audience of Pope Paul VI of November 26, 1969. in Documentation catholique

It will be the pious people who will be the most disturbed. They had their respectable way of following the Mass; they will now feel deprived of their usual thoughts and obliged to follow others. (...) As we said last time, we must see clearly the reasons for which this serious change has been introduced: Ibembesty to the Council, which now becomes obedience to the bishops, who interpret and carry out its prescriptions. (...) It is the will of Christ, it is the breath of the Holy Spirit that calls the Church to this change.

It seemed that all that remained for the pope to do was to use his authority to impose the rite which was so disturbing to souls. One will notice however that, by doing this,! sovereign pontiff distorted the serious objections which had been prestntto him and did not answer them. The great difficulty which stopped some bishops and many priests was not so much that of personal piety. It had to do with the objective ambiguities inherent in the new rite, which manifested something other than the sacrifice of Christ.

The question of ecclesiastical authority, and that of the pope in particular,” was now a burning issue. Father Calmel had repeatedly explained Catholic doctrine on this question. It would be necessary for him not only to explain it, but to put it into practice in a heart-rending way.

The non possumus ‘

- The preparation j

In December 1962, Father Calmel had summarized the Catholic thought on the mass and on the history of the world;

Until the last day the Mass will be celebrated, presenting to the Father the perfect sacrifice, the treasure of all grace, the reparation for every offense, the consolation for every distress. The Gospel, the Mass - the Word of life, the holy sacrifice - these two realities will not pass away, because the Word became flesh and dwelt among us forever. (…) This is forever the time of the Gospel™.

From then on, the Pope called for a “new Mass”, for a “new era”, for a Church that had to follow the evolution of the world. These two conceptions could not but clash. We already know that Father Calmel understood very well the need for a certain reform of the men of the Church, especially in the field of the liturgy. He saw how the clergy I

La n I lut! fl y/i

his time was far from the spirit of holiness and prayer that animates the Catholic liturgy. In November of that same year, 1969, he grieved: “What hurts the most is that priests have so little sense of the Eucharist”h That is why he had followed with interest, in its early days, the work of the Liturgical Movement and even of the National Center for Liturgical Pastoral Care, until the day he understood that it was not a matter of the reformers making the priest a man of God and a man of sacrifice, but rather a man of the world and a social animator. A few weeks after his Declaration he wrote:

Certainly there were some alterations to be made to the missal - I was less reluctant than anyone else, for example, to add some old prefaces, not to multiply the genuflections so much. But Paul VI has done something else (even if he has done this); he has introduced a revolutionary permanent reform that multiplies equivocations and leads to protestantism. Whoever sees this - and many priests see it - cannot be an accomplice".

He himself, in any case, did not want to fail in his duty;

Since Dominican sanctity includes the celebration of the Mass in a special way, it is appropriate for the Dominican more than anyone else to defend the rite of the Mass and to block modernism on this threatened front...

The first reactions encouraged the defender of the faith. By June, he could rejoice:

Pray for the priests who refuse the new Ordo missæ. The Courrier de Rome (Abbé Dulac, editor of the Courrier de Rome, 70 years old, friend of Abbé Berto, admirable canonist and the least excited man in the world - very different from the Abbé de Nantes) opened fire with irrefutable arguments. He himself prayed with all his soul and had people pray that, before the month of May, he would be able to make a decision.

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Father Calmel took action. On September 19, he dared to write to the “Very deferential letter, don’t be afraid,” he told a correspondent. There is no trace of any acknowledgement of receipt.

As the fateful date of December 1” approached, Father Calmd 1 addressed himself with ever greater insistence to God and his saints. In these times of “revolution in the Church”, he was certain that Mary was defending the Church of her Son. And he was confident. On November 4, he met with Jean Madiran on this subject. The day before, he had written his thoughts;

It is impossible for the pope not to allow the freedom to follow the mass of St. Pius V, so many complaints are made and so motivated; but the French “episcopal conference” will try to intimidate the priests.

At least those who prefer the Lord will know that they are not putting themselves in conflict with the Pope by keeping the old Mass. Lord, increase the courage and pride of priests.

However, the will of Rome seemed inescapable; “Pray, hold on, fight; as far as the Church is concerned, I don’t think we can do anything, because the evil is considerable everywhere. “And Father Calmel saw the moment coming when he would have to say no. His long studies on the strategy of revolution and on the often latent forms of subversion found a practical application in this painful circumstance. He often quoted Clemenceau’s famous expression, “The revolution is a block. In the case of the

liturgical revolution, this meant not dwelling on this or that detail, but considering the phenomenon as a whole, not only in its “material” elements but in its “form”, in its soul. Paul VI’s method; never formal precepts. Let things be imposed by social pressure, so that good, naive people believe themselves bound in conscience.

For the new Ordo, he does not use the required ritual formula: notwithstanding any custom to the contrary, even several centuries old. In any case, the reasons given by Cardinal Ottaviani are sufficient to legitimize this refusal. Why refuse the new Ordo missæ? Because it is part of a movement - it has a meaning. It is part of a mobile, interchangeable liturgy. It is not heretical in itself, it is valid, but it leads to heresy.

277-Letter of October 25, 1969.

278-Letter dated November 3, 1969. 279 ‘ Letter dated November 10, 1969.

The liturgical revolution

Revolution has a distant, hidden, perverse end. And an immediate objective sometimes good, most often good. Pope Paul VI had summarized the duty of Catholics with regard to his reform as that of obedience. In a private interview, Father Calmel recalled the Catholic doctrine on this beautiful virtue and concluded that it was precisely out of obedience that one had to refuse any compromise with the liturgical revolution. “It is not schism to keep Tradition,” he wrote on November 15. Two days later, speaking to a Dominican teacher, he explained:

Let the novices understand that the extreme is part of the Christian life. Fidelity to Christ does not exclude extreme situations.

The situation presupposes faith in the infallibility and primacy of the pope. But these are at the service of Tradition. When they no longer respect it, we must see it.

Infallibility is limited, therefore, and so is obedience. Infallibility does not imply that the Pope does not sin. But when he sins in his authority, when he allows and approves revolutionary reforms, there is no need to follow him. (…)

The day when the authority of the pope plays into the hands of revolutionary reforms, we can no longer follow him. This risks leading us to the margins, without excommunicating us.

At the same time as seeing this, nourish yourself with the doctrine and approach the sacraments.

It is necessary to pray a lot. But grace is given. In order to lose as little as possible, it is necessary to remain faithful to Tradition".

It is not lightly, it is not to make beautiful sentences that Father Calmel spoke of "extreme situations". He saw the time coming when he would have to make a decision that would commit his whole life, to speak in public to support the souls who called upon his priesthood. More than ever, he wanted to think and act in front of God and Christ. His correspondence of the time reflects his anxiety. He seemed to withdraw into the depths of his soul, to call upon all the lights, all the graces, all the joys of prayer that had passed through his heart since the age of fifteen, to speak, to offer his life in a final sacrifice, in a final effort:

The Declaration

■ November 27, 1969. three days before the fateful date of the misecn.ppt in of the new Ordo miss<e. the son of St.

Dominic expressed his rcfui l t to read this historical text to guess from which look of faith, of , “dl thcological of which love of God, of which depth it comes.ii U a death I father Calmel wants to remain faithful to the Mass of his ordin” X I, traditional, the one that was codified, but not

several times secular. So I refuse to do so. Why? Because, in reality, this Ordo Missre does not exist This, nor does it exist it is a universal and permanent liturgical revolution, taken up or wanted by the present pope, and which for the quarter

the mask of the Ordo Miss* of April 3, 1969. It is the right of every priest to refuse to wear the mask of this liturgical revolution, and I consider it my duty as a priest to refuse to celebrate Mass in an equivocal rite.

If we accept this new rite, which favours the confusion between the Catholic Mass and the Protestant Lord’s Supper - as the saying goes

quite evident in the rite of the Mass ordered by St. Pius V, is concealed if not concealed in the new rite.

Simple honesty, then, but infinitely more so priestly honor, demands that I not have the impudence to tamper with the Catholic Mass, received on the day of ordination. Since it is a question of being loyal, especially in a matter of divine gravity, there is no authority in the world, not even a pontifical authority, that can stop me. Besides, the first proof of fidelity and love that the priest has to give to God and to men is to keep intact the infinitely precious deposit that was entrusted to him when the bishop laid his hands on him. It is on this proof of fidelity and love that I will be judged by the

Supreme Judge. I confidently expect the Virgin Mary, the mother of the High Priest, to obtain for me the faithfulness to the true and unequivocal Catholic Mass until the end. Tuus sum ego, salm mefac (I am all yours, save me).

The emotion and the strength that pass through this Declaration appear on the first reading. Father Calmel feels that he is accomplishing an act of extreme importance, which puts at stake his future and that of all those who will follow him. For, it was not only a question, here, of a doctrinal criticism of the new Ordo, but of a practical, definitive refusal to “celebrate Mass according to this rite.

Moved by a visible inspiration of the Holy Spirit, by the gifts of intelligence, counsel and strength, he wrote this masterpiece in one go. In the process, he did not even keep a copy. He would say a few days later: “Jtn’ii no duplicate; it came out in one draft. It was not false humility to admit: “From everywhere I receive letters for this Declaration which comes from far beyond me - from Christ the Priest - “who has already delivered souls (Christ through this Declaration).

It is undoubtedly difficult to form an idea of the suffering of râmt,il (the intellectual effort, the physical tension even of Father Calmel in the days and hours that precede the composition of this Declaration. On the other hand, it is certain that they had very harmful repercussions on his health. It is astonishing to note that such a strong text and such a courageous act were made by a religious who was literally exhausted, in a body that was in a state of deterioration and, what is more, in a hospital room.

On the very day of November 27, Father Calmel had to be taken urgently to the clinic in Carcassonne for a blood transfusion. He stayed there for a week and a half. It was there, in his sickroom, that he wrote down his historic position against the new Mass. He gave it to the Dominican sister who had accompanied him so that she could pass it on to Jean Madiran.

Immediately after his release from the clinic, the intrepid preacher resumed his apostolic travels. At the beginning of January, he felt ill on the platform of the Metz train station. His breathless heart could not take it anymore. He tried to reassure his family by recalling that, at the age of fifteen, he had experienced this at certain times “h But the situation worsened. On Friday, January 1, he had to go to Dr. Nauze, who had him put in a clinic immediately. Mother Hélène tells us:

After a thousand examinations the doctor found nothing in the heart or anywhere, but such an anemia that more than half of the red blood cells were missing! So a transfusion was given immediately. (He received four transfusions.) We just had him on the phone. He spoke for a long time and was certainly not lacking in vitality despite his shortness of breath. (…) It is a matter of Father allowing himself to be cared for; this time he really needs it.

Yes, because the consequences of this weakening could have been tragic, as the future will show.

- Follow-up to the Declaration

For the moment, the fart Calmel was thinking of something else. This Declaration had to be spread. A few weeks before, he had given some indications to the abbot of Nantes about this project that he was going over in his mind. In spite of his

contradictory positions, the Abbot would have liked to take charge of its publication. But it was to Jean Madiran that the Father entrusted the task.

The director of 'Itinéraires' proposed a "happy correction" to Father Calmel's text, and the latter gladly accepted it. He immediately sent his agreement by mail; "It's done," he wrote. The hitchhiking was angelically easy - round trip (and P.T.T.) in one hour (…). Madiran was great in this matter. The paper will appear, God willing, for the January issue, thus before Christmas.

Certainly, Father Calmel saw the narrow limits of his Oér/araftos.EIlcior tait from the pen of a simple priest. He would have liked it to start from more than just a bishop who spoke. That is why, even before composing his text, he had begged Archbishop Lefebvre to speak. But, for the second time, the latter preferred to rely on the letter of the Roman cardinals.

Madiran wrote to Archbishop Lefebvre, as I had done unsuccessfully… this summer, begging him to compromise himself, that is, to publish something under his name. So far - except for two cardinals, Ottaviani and Bacci - no bishop has dared to say; it is I, such a one, who says no. It will come.

In the meantime, his honor and his duty as a priest guided his conduct:

Since the present pontificate by its unheard-of innovations calls the Mass into question, the priest who believes in the

Mass will call into question on this crucial point the innovations of the present pontificate’”.

Such a strong position could not leave the Order’s authorities indifferent. The Declaration is making a lot of noise in the Order and in Rome,” wrote Mother Hélène Jamet, “but he is at peace, and may the Blessed Virgin put her hand there too! “Father Rzewuski, immediate superior of Father Caltnel in the vicariate of Prouilhe, was summoned to Rome on this subject. Rzewuski, the immediate superior of Fr. Caltnel in the vicariate of Prouilhe, was summoned to Rome. He was forbidden to celebrate mass for the nuns and had to be satisfied with the chapel of the hostel. From time to time, some amird, Carcassonne attended. But there were always two nuns present who were charged by their superiors to record the names of those who came to the mass of the “rebel” priest.

Father Calmel was the first, as far as we know, to express such a practical rejection of the new Ordo. However, far from giving himself a prophetic mission, he relied on the reaction of others, even though they were of a more private nature, and he rejoiced greatly: “My declarations are far from being the only ones. The lie will be unmasked and is beginning to be unmasked”’,”

288 - November 25, 1970. Archbishop Lefebvre drew up a text which was both doctrinal and partial, and which definitively rejected the new slate of the Mass. He entrusted this declaration only to the Semiuriim and did not make it public until June 9, 1971 (see Mgr Tissicr de Mallerais, MamlLrfrbm ma Clovis, 2002, p. 487),

289 - Letter of December 2, 1969.

290 - Breveapotopr for the Church of Always, 1987 edition. p. 25.

291 ■ U méie Hélène Jamet’s slow of January 19, 1970.

292 ‘ Letter of 23 January 1970.

293 - Letter of December 23, 1969.

His historical and providential reaction enlightened and encouraged many priests and faithful.

The admiration and gratitude of many found a remarkable expression in the words of Luce Quenette, the founder and director of the Péraudière school:

I enclose the simple, the beautiful, the restful Declaration of Father Calmel, I say restful. These priests are not tense, they do not feel heroic. They are happy and their resolution is a song in pain. The unchanged mass will be offered on their altar. They do not condemn anyone. They do not deliberate, they see and they go. And that they exist makes us share this pabt above all feelings, this pabt of the angels to the sacrifice of Heaven. We would give our lives, our possessions, whatever it takes to protect these priests. For the holy sacrifice, they do not feel that they are making a sacrifice.

Read this Declaration with piety, with admiration, as the commitment of a priest’s heart, but also as the complete expression of our suffering, finally as a light so that other priestly souls may receive the same light, and be carried, if it pleases God, by the same Inspiration.

A deep peace, indeed, that of a soldier who has accomplished his duty, dwelt in Father Calmel's soul in those terrible hours. His correspondence shows his detachment;

I hope Madiran will publish my Declaration, duly motivated, sent on November 27 (Miraculous Medal) to hold to the old Ordo and to refuse the equivocal - though not formally heretical - Mass of Paul VI. I will be no more subject to sanctions, I am morally sure, for this, for this public declaration - than I was for calling the bishops tartuffes… I will simply be a little more pigeonholed, but I will have allowed (I hope) some priests, through my Declaration, not to give in on this point where everything is at stake: the Mass. There (and nowhere, but there above all), nothing and nobody, not even the Pope, will make me collaborate in throwing the equivocation

The only thing to ask for me is to know always more than grace is always enough. We ask this of the mother of divine grace.

And then, I am of Mary who will save me: tuus sum ego, salvum mefac

Father Roger-Thomas Calmel

Let us not tremble. Jesus is never so close to us as when he is

Our Lady of Victories, pray for us".

race (miracle) that we ask for Christmas:

That I do, in total self-forgetfulness, the ministry that Jesus expects of me

1 these times of papal treason. (…)

May we be consumed in Love

As useless servants in a resistance of a nature too special for us to have ever foreseen, let alone desired, we implore the grace, not to be exempt from the struggle, but to sustain it with a pure and tranquil heart. May creatures (here the necessities and hazards of resistance) be nothing to us and nothing to them, as St. John of the Cross says, but that we move in silence and oblivion of ourselves, hidden in the heart of the Beloved.

or my part, I am at peace, it is the hour of tuus sum ego, salvum lefac (of my Declaration). Having the more than sufficient moral certainty that Paul VI has broken with the Church, even if the great number of people do not yet see it, I have chosen the Church of the Lord and of his Eucharist. I think cheerfully that the light and peace (without fanfare) that Jesus gives me, he will give to those whom he wanted to unite to himself through my priesthood.

There is such a sweetness, such a peace,

me strength in life with Christ.

^not to separate strength and gentleness. See the martyrdom: the strength and the sweetness of the martyrs*”.

In a private interview in April 1970, Father Calmel nicely summarized his ide at the heart of the struggle and the controversy. This is the lesson he wanted to imettrc to his spiritual children:

To go through the struggles, the stories, but without losing the peace, the rest in God. No despair, no hatred.

I do not like the taste of powder too much, nor do I lack inner nourishment”.

The liturgical revolution

- Articles

Father Calmel’s strong reaction to the liturgical reforms was rooted in sound theology. This is clear from the text of his Declaration. The theologian and guide of so many souls needed to further substantiate his position, to justify it in the light of the Church’s long-standing teaching. He did this mainly in the magazine Itinéraires.

In December, Jean Madiran asked him to write an article that defied the Roman canon, a defense that was “not long, but that carried”. Father Ca prays and makes people pray in order to be up to the task, then he adds: “Mad is very decided to support true priests and true Mass and I found it very fr: nel”. “As usual, the author thinks and ruminates his article, he births it little by little in his mind, he counts on the help of Heaven; “All the saints who loved her will come to my aid. “

In order to remain as objective as possible, Father Calmel carefully avoided “any hint of polemics” in his article, and abbreviated it as much as possible. Finally, his work was published in the magazine in April. Convinced that the best refutation of the liturgical revolution of 11, which was in some minds “even before the Council,” consisted in a clear exposition of Catholic doctrine on the Mass, Father Calmel extended the first explanation of the canon through several articles.

In June 1970, “The Mystical Meal” defines the holy sacrifice of the Mass With the theological accuracy that we know, the author goes to the essence The objective reality of the

sacrifice of the Cross (its holiness, its efficacy) is no less present on our altars, at every Mass, than it was on Calvary on the afternoon of Good Friday. (…) The sacrifice is the same because the immolation of Good Friday, the same, is brought to us under an effective sign, a sacramental rite: effecit quod significat (p. 18) “*.

19. This is a collection of dVriclcs by Father C: nicaincs teachers of the Holy Name of Jesus

The following development on the “sacramental order” touches on the problem of the Mass. This is a sacramental sacrifice, the one that best suits the infinite love of God:

For all the generations that will follow one another until the Patousia - in the midst of what vicissitudes, what anguish, what iniquities - for these generations that cannot do without sacrifice any more than they can do without religion (for there is no religion without sacrifice), will there be no sacrifice except in remembrance, in the pious commemoration, but deprived of objective and actual reality, of the immolation of Good Friday? (…) To these very serious questions, to these solemn questions of absence which a loving heart cannot avoid asking itself, the Heart of Christ, who loves without measure, has answered with the real presence, but under a veil; the real sacrifice and the true communion, but under a veil; the true priesthood, but through a validly ordained minister through whom it is himself who acts.

So under a veil, as is normal for the life of faith; true presence, true sacrifice, true bread from Heaven, true communion, true priesthood rAfysteriwm Fidei. These are

some of the conveniences of the love of a redeeming God (p. 23).

Moreover, it is in this faith and love, in the same impulse that made her adore and celebrate the holy mysteries, “that the Church has believed in the mystery of the Mass and has found the most worthy ritual framework for surrounding, glorifying, and presenting with the most beautiful transparency the sacrifice that her Spouse has given her,” (p. 24) (p. 24) Based on this twenty-fold faith in the revealed doctrine of the Mass and in the wisdom of the Church from the beginning, every priest and every faithful Catholic must reject the new Ordo of the Mass;

The radical vice of the new Ordo is that it has introduced into the celebration of the Mass the system of ad libitum rites, of ad libitum and often imprecise forms which, under the guarantee of legality, authorize both the true Mass and the heretical “memorial. To this multi-faceted mass, as the Courier from Rome so rightly says, we do not

In a vague and more or less mystical way, iclarivizing the actuality of the sacrifice of the altar and considerably diminishing the importance of the rite. TcUc had certainly been the general orientation of the Liturgical Movement, thus preparing the minds for the upheaval of the liturgy.

307 ‘ In a private letter, the worst Calmel explains the concept of “memorial” that the Tradition

the Eucharist: a memorial, but not as a mere mortal might have done; an effective memorial of the sacrifice of Good Friday: that is to say, containing that sacrifice because it contains Christ immolated. “(Letter of March 15, 1970)

Father Roger-Thomas Calmel

If, as we had hoped for a moment, those responsible for the present liturgical revolution had been looking for real progress, they would have known first of all that the first condition to be fulfilled in order to make the most of the treasure of the revealed gift is to insert oneself devoutly into the interior of the Tradition which has brought us this treasure by making its riches explicit. If they had had this Christian view of things, they would have been able, perhaps, to purify the real increases in liturgical matters from some parasitic excrescences; they would have woken up from their sleep too many faithful and priests numbed in the dullness of a lazy regularity and a soulless conformism; they would have worked for a progress worthy of the name. (…) Instead of encouraging this progress, they tried to impose a hypocritical deviation on us.

Our resistance to the postconciliar liturgical deviation, let us say our refusal of any complicity with the immoral modernist betrayal which has been operating especially for the last thirteen years, our Christian resistance is situated in the right line of liturgical progress whose impulse goes back to the holy Pope Pius X, when the great pope of modern times rediscovered in his outpouring the patristic tradition, without neglecting the medieval and post-tridentine acquis. We do what is within us so that our resistance prolongs this impulse full of life and full of promises (p. 7).

Father Calmel would take up these ideas in chapter five of his Briveap Logue for the Church of Always. Until his death, he would not cease to return to the subject of the Mass, so much so that he knew it was at the heart of the present crisis

- Liturgical life

Where did such ardor and constancy in fighting the new rite of the Mass come from? From a deeply priestly heart, from a soul attached with all its love to the sovereign priest and his sacrifice.

Already in 1950, in Sebn l'Évangile, Father Calmel regretted the lukewarmness with which many celebrated the Holy Sacrifice or attended it. A few years later, during his retreat at Pontcallec in July 1958, the preacher devoted two instructions to the mystery of the Mass. 11 had recalled the

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Before being denied dogmatically (by the Protestant heresy), the Mass, for more than a century, had been denied by experience. "That is why it was so easily abandoned by a crowd of priests and faithful. History being the teacher of life, Father Calmel saw the time coming very soon when Catholics would leave the rites of the Mass of all time, for lack of love, for lack of having lived in tune with the sacrifice of Christ, for lack of that holiness which is nothing other than "the interior prayer which corresponds to the liturgical prayer. In 1971, he could say: "It seems to me that the most urgent thing I have to do is to write again about the Holy Mass. When you see what Father Le Brun wrote about the Mass in the 18th century, when you study that monument of pious erudition, the Explanation of the Mass, when you see the degree of icy correctness to which the celebration of the Mass had fallen - in general - before the present apostasy, you think that lukewarmness (and an ignorance that is the fruit of lukewarmness) had long since invaded the clergy. You know that one must live the mystery of God in order to celebrate the holy mysteries with dignity. This is what I would like to live and what I would like to say.

When asked, “Why did the priests give up so quickly? “He answered quite simply: “Because the Mass did not inform their lives - their whole lives. “And the conclusion was obvious: “We will only return to the Mass of St. Pius V if we convert.” It was a whole conception of the priesthood, of the Church and of holiness that was at stake.

With him, it was the cry of the love of a loving son, the indignation of an adoring faith that spoke, not that of rubricism or nostalgia;

The one I adore in this very small tabernacle - forgive me, Lord, for these blinded sisters - is the same one who is at the right hand of the Father. (…)

Û Lord, how is it that your priests and the virgins who are consecrated to you diminish and suppress the marks of adoration? Give them to believe and to love. Let the streams of infinite tenderness that are contained in you overflow into my soul. Make me a holy priest of the order of St. Dominic. It is so normal to be consumed by your love.

It will not be useless to go through the works of Father Calmel on the liturgy at the time of his Declaration. They are a trace of his theological vision and of his

of the Church’s prayer. He combines a great mastery of Ugj, Latin, a very fine artistic sensitivity and a very high spirit of faith.

From his first preaching to the Dominican Sisters of the Holy Name of Jesus, the son of St. Dominic tried to translate and begin the hymn Ave Maris Stella, the “traveler’s song” as he

called it (November 29, 1953), and the Advent responsories (December 1955).

In 1969, he resumed these works with renewed ardor. With the study of the hymn of the Holy Name of Jesus (versified in seven-foot verses), and the hymn of the All Saints' Lauds (November 1969), he undertook a commentary on all the psalms of the breviary. He embellished his reading with quotations from St. John of the Cross, Pascal, and even from Virgil in Latin and Plotinus in Greek, and with personal considerations. Calmel sees in the psalms the prayer of Christ and of the Bride, and therefore a school of prayer:

The psalter is the expression, in inspired poetry, of a very high and holy prayer. (…) Ibraison of the psalter is expressed in various modes and passes easily from one mode to another, often in the same psalm. (…) In order to usefully say the psalms we must be in a state of prayer ourselves and be willing to be drawn into the psalmist's mode of prayer. In so doing, the psalms will educate us greatly in our life with God; they will, in particular, set us on the path of purity in our interior conversation "*.

His love of liturgical texts is perhaps most apparent in his commentaries on the hymns. In that of the first vespers of the Ascension, he sees an "adoring and admiring contemplation for the uncreated majesty of Christ, the magnificence of his work and his definitive victory". On the subject of the hymn of the lauds of this same feast, he gives free rein to his admiration: "A very tender hymn (…) one of the most beautiful mystical (and ascetic) hymns that I know. (…) The Church is a bride and it is her heart as a bride that expresses itself in this first stanza to the glorious Christ. Yes, it is a bride who speaks. Her heart as a bride warns her that this Christ

When will I come and stand before the face of God? When? at the hour of my death qi fie: and. while waiting for this tenconne, a little more each day insofar as the love pi n soul. because the promise of Jesus is formal: “Blessed are the pure in heart, they shall see God.” >

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who sits in glory, who presides over Heaven, who governs the machinery of the world, this Christ in glory is also our joy; and even he went to sit in glory in order to make himself our joy (…); and this Christ makes our joy so much that he abolishes, as it were, the joys of the earth; because he is in glory and waits for us there, brings us there, well! Well, we do not lack joy even though we lack the joys of the world, the simplest joys, for example, that of a normal common life. It is then the ofFice of St. Dominic” and the hymns of the Christmas lauds”” that hold his attention. The years 1972”’ and 1973 were also very rich in commentaries on texts. A few passages from these meditations will suffice to grasp the elevation and the depth of the liturgical spirit of their author: Compare the various ways of addressing Jesus Christ in the different hymns and see how they are always dignified and at the same time cordial: adoring and at the same time familiar. (…) Péguy said that the liturgy is a relaxed theology; let us add: a praying theology. Recourse to liturgical hymns should nourish our faith and give our prayer that solidity and simplicity that only a vision of faith can provide.

The more one meditates on and sings these hymns of the Cross, by St. Venantius of Poitiers, the more one finds in them inexhaustible nourishment for faith and prayer, for these poems, like those of St. Ambrose of Milan for the

Nativity, stand at the height of the mystery, speak of it only by analogy, It is true Christian poetry, just as the stained glass windows of Notre Dame de Chartres are true Christian art. (…) Let us let ourselves be

321 . For Palm Sunday 1972. U comments on the Kexeffit /tryn. In the train of Cistelnaudary, June 6, 1972. he composes a paraphrased tniduction of the sequence UiuLi Sim. Then came the Siabai Mater (September 15, 1972), the Advent hymn (Cmdttoraimesiàentm, Verbttm lupemum, Vax cUra ecce inionat, December 17, 1972).

322 - Introduction to Vrlt/oro te (February 18, 1973), Regmivit Dominus, motet of Sedulius (v’siccle) (March 12, 1973), Hymn of Christmas (p^nr Redemptor Gentium) and of Epiphany (rl Patte utiigeiiinu), Easter compiles, and the Part hngua (April 8, 1973) VexiUa Regis (transposition, April 9, 1973), Easter vespers hymn Ael eeaam Agni prot/iJi (May 4, 1973). Antiphons ‘O’ (December 21, 1973), sequence Latabunrlus (translation and commentary, December 22, 1973).

323 ■ Easter Compiles, April 8, 1973.

Father Roger-Thomas Calmel

carry by the invitation to consider only in faith the sorrows and torments of Christ crucified

I will not deny that the words and the movement of the Slahal expose us to sliding down a sentimental slope. We are a little too far from the sovereign doctrinal balance of the Fathers of the Church. The words which maintain the evocation of this pain at the level of its properly supernatural mystery are somewhat drowned out; however, they are there; but we must take care to free them; otherwise the Slabal would be recited at the level of a very

noble pathos, no doubt, but which is not the level of the pain and peace of Christ and of Our Lady®,

His comments, in 1974, on the Dies ira^^, the Te lucis of the complies’^ei of the Rorate ceelp-* aroused in him lively outbursts of admiration and filial piety with regard to these manifestly inspired composers’. We shall retain his last text, written nearly three months before his death. On the subject of the office of Saint Agnes, he exclaims:

This office is composed as a song of thanksgiving and a canticle of love of a virgin of Christ who has only one hurry; to join the Spouse; she says and repeats the spiritual wonders of this meeting. (…) To say an office like that of Saint Agnes helps (consecrated virgins) to better grasp what the intensity of their love for the divine Spouse should be

It is indeed the heart of the Church, it is its love for Christ in its purest and most luminous expression that one aimed in boulevetsani the Roman liturgy. One understands better then the indignation of the author of such elevations at the sight of the liturgical revolution of the years 1969-1970. It is in this light that one must consider his defense of the faith and of the prayer of all time.

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Mass in the trenches

During an apostolic trip to the East, in May 1973, Father Calmel had the grace to visit Verdun and the fort of Douaumont. At the end of the visit, he wrote;

I speak trembling about Verdun and Douaumont, those high places of so much heroism, of so much holiness, of such an appalling horror; an immense cemetery of fifteen thousand small white crosses, all the same. But the number of dead in

a few months was not fifteen thousand nor one hundred and fifty thousand, but half a million; half a million baptized, mowed down between twenty and thirty-five years old in a few months. And I speak only of the French side.

In the chapel of Douaumont, exactly in the chapel of the Blessed Sacrament, in Douaumont, I see again - I will never forget it - the stained glass window of the mass in the trench. Behind the sacks of earth, a priest with discarded vestments offers the holy sacrifice on a makeshift altar; a piece of candle is fixed in the barrels of two rifles; the sky is criss-crossed with shells, all the trees that we see are shaken, shredded, chopped up; the soldiers have outfits all stained with mud; it is the solemn moment of the consecration: they bow their heads, having on their faces a poignant expression of adoration, of reverence, of consent to the divine will.

Mass in the trench… Let the French make every Sunday the efforts, which can become heroic, to unite themselves to a Catholic mass, and the Lord who instituted the mass will have mercy on France

Father Roger-Thomas Calmel

Father Calmel’s parallel between the disasters of the great gnem and those caused by the liturgical revolution was not new. In the midst of so many apostasies, to go to the front, to visit the trenches of the Catholic resistance, to encourage the soldiers, to bring them the support of his advice, the light of theology, the blood of the Savior who makes the saints germinate, and to give them the support of the Church.

Operation Survival

From the month of December 1969, Father Calmel received an abundance of news that intensified as the weeks went by. The letters from priests and laity comforted by the Declaration continue to flow in," he wrote on January 31. Thank you to Our Lady. "And, on February 9: "I continue to receive overwhelming testimonies from priests and laity who were waiting for my Declaration. "

- The first reactions

Among these answers, those of the priests especially touched his heart.

On January 4, he received "the approval and praise of dear Dom Gerard Deo gratias. "

In January 1970, the famous Abbé Dulac published a text in Ilinitm signed with his name, showing that the new Ordo missa did not oblige anyone to do anything. He wrote me an admirable letter," Father Calmel rejoiced, "telling me that he had insisted on publishing a note signed by Dulac so as not to leave me alone as a priest. Now Dulac is formidable and feared. He was in solidarity with me. "Then the Dominican expressed his optimism in a colourful way: "Rome does nothing, will do nothing, and they are certainly in the tar - as when one walks on a freshly tarmacked road.

At the end of January, Father Calmel received important news. "On February 10-11, the leadership of the Spanish Association of St. Anthony Mary Claret (which has 6,000 priests) will hold its meeting in Madrid. Let us pray for them. Dulac will be there. It is very important, because their position against the new Mass is very clear - and feared^". "In the February issue of Itinl raires their rejection of the new Ordo was published, along with statements by Father Dulac, Madiran and Marcel De Corte.

Soon it was Father Guérard des Lauriers, a Dominican, who made his presence felt. At the same time that he assured him of the publication in April of his article on the Canon of the Mass, Madiran announced to Father Calmel “hDeclaration, [Deo patios] signed, of course, by another Dominican - a famous and difficult theologian - Father Guérard des Lauriers. Finally!” At the beginning of March, Father Calmel received an “excellent letter from Father Guérard des Lauriers o.p., a true fighter for the faith. Thanks to Saint Dominic and Saint Thomas.

The parish priest of Montjavoult, Father Coachc, who exchanged correspondence with Father Calmel, maintained the Tridentine rite and gathered many faithful during the Corpus Christi processions. Others, without SC manifesting themselves to the general public, resisted against all odds to keep the mass of their ordination

For many priests, however, the situation seemed inextricable. Their perplexity and even their anguish were quite understandable. Faced with such formal orders from Rome and their bishops, subjected to terrible moral pressure from their superiors as well as from their fellow priests or their faithful, the priests trembled and knew only how to weep. In a fit of temper, Father Calmel described the situation very well;

But what is the point of all of them flooding me with letters to tell me that this is the beginning of the end - or that I have been admirable - or that things are going very badly, etc.? If they prayed, meditated, persevered in celebrating the Mass for ever, they would burden me less with their

epistles which dispense them from risking for good "This invective is more than the irritation of a humility offended by indiscreet compliments. It is an appeal. With profound respect and indulgent kindness, Father Calmel said to his confreres: the time is no longer to moan, but to act.

334 - Letter of February 21, 1970. Father Guérard des Lauriers had been the principal editor of the Brief Critical Examination of the New Missal, signed and signed by Cardinals Ottaviani and Bacci at the end of the year.

336 - These were, among many others, Father Fousset, in Dijon, whom Father Calmel considered a saint, or Father Choulot, pastor of Montalzat and then of Ncgrcpclisse.

- First justifications

In November 1969, he wrote to a young Dominican nun who was a little distraught at the seriousness of the crisis and its consequences: "You know, people believe less and less in the divinity of Jesus and in the Gospel.

Trinity; even if one does not make a provocative profession of impiety. The religion founded by Jesus is asked to be a privileged ferment, a stimulus, in the Babylonian enterprise of building a world! (...) For this work of pseudo-messianism, (...) make way for the priest who has become a layman in his own right, (...) make way for a Christianity in tune with the taste of the day - in tune with the taste of the devil - at last completely new and adapted, resolutely turned towards the future of the world and not towards eternal beatitude, preserving from the old religion only those appearances that

are indispensable in order not to make the masses flee but to make them turn away insensibly. (…)

Yes. Excuse my daughter for this long diagnosis. It is right, and it is terrible. 11 notes that a pseudo-church is now at work, has insinuated itself inside the true Church; a cancer that is eating away at it; not the tearing of the schism but the underground proliferation of the modernist cancer. (…)

Now, you don't think that Jesus (…) will let us lack grace, whatever the equivocations of the disconcerting Paul VI and in spite of the pressure of the bishops who have become the puppets whose "collegiality" pulls the strings. We will not pact with the equivocations of the vicar of Christ, (…) but Jesus, who shows us not to pact, is always there to defend us; and one day he will give his Church a vicar who will be worthy of the holy popes like St. Pius V and St. Pius X".

This "we will not pact", this millam partem, as radical as it may seem, was imposed on the simplest faithful as on the greatest doctors. From the beginning of January 1970, Father Calmel envisaged the future: On Sunday (in Prouilhe) I will have… a few other parishioners… I think that Our Lord will give me an unexpected ministry,

- Any reforming pope can only act by relying on small, sure and fervent communities. We must prepare them for the Pope that the Holy Spirit can give us.

- No longer go to any meetings.

- Don't answer anything, any questionnaire. It puts in doubt what is unquestionable.

On the strength of these opinions, which were so in line with his own thinking, Father Calmel did not hesitate to advocate a practical and radical refusal of the new.

On March 15, 1970, he preached a recollection to a few faithful in Toulon;

We are in the true Church, I will tell them, tested as always; more tested, however, than fifteen or twenty years ago; but a Church which is sure to win now, as yesterday

The greatest danger today is that the Church will not be able to “dodge their post” in the name of “mysticism”. “The greatest danger today is to delude oneself, to avoid combat in favor of peace”, under the pretext of preserving the spiritual life. However, it is a very poor way of putting the present-day situation to one side to choose between defending the truth, resisting the new, and the interior or mystical life on the other. For it is precisely the supernatural life and the demands of religious life that forbid any compromise, any human fear, any cowardice. “The martyrs of the first centuries, the bishops (Athanasius, Chrysostom and Hilary) did not avoid prison. That is why “this testimony cannot be given without mystical life”, it “cannot be lived without a life of union with God”, it is even required by mysticism.

The religious rules and constitutions must be read according to the circumstances, which today are those of a “time of apostasy”, they must be understood “in the conjuncture of the martyrs”, in the exceptional situation of a Church “in a state of immanent apostasy”, attacked in its bosom by the modernist heresy^’*’.

There is no doubt that the duty of resistance is even more urgent today because of the very nature of heresy. The enemies of Tradition, in fact, are not content to work within

the Church itself, they use a brand new method of action, that of revolution, which acts through “commissions”. “In times of revolution, and here we are, authority is maneuvered and dominated by parallel authorities. “Whatever it is, the authority advances the revolution.

If, therefore, in normal times, resistance to authority can be necessary when it “commands or suggests sin or complicity in sin”, it is all the more necessary in the face of an authority manipulated by secret structures. “Without obsidional psychosis, certainly, which would be a sign dettoitesst and of hardening, without inflating and without sectarianism, it is then necessary to morrmr intractable, not to accept any effective collaboration. “

The present situation calls for a profound understanding of modernism and its methods, as they had been exposed by the Pope

340 - During a stay in Saini-Cloud in August 1971, the worst Calmel had the joy of receiving a visit from Father Marie-Dominique Philippe o.p. The latter remained firm on the Mass, but the zealous defender of the faith that Father Calmel was regretted in his confrere a certain irenicism that was dedicated to the

siint Pius X: “The modernist is a heretic doubled with a traitor (a process of internal nndestruction which denies nothing precise, while keeping the façade). To know that modernism keeps everything in theology, but reinterprets everything. “That is why, “we must not concede anything. To

be religious now is “the. Do not concede anything until martyrdom. We must keep a very firm line: the fight - the martyrdom. No speeches. “

One remembers how Father Calmel was helped in his understanding of revolutionary methods by the studies of Augustin Cochin and Jean Madiran. His contacts with Louis Daménie (Fleury) (1911-1972) were also very helpful. In his contribution to the special issue of L’Ordre Français on Louis Daménie, he wrote:

I admired and loved this Christian, this soldier, this counter-revolutionary thinker whose ideas were nourished by experience. I deeply admired and loved him from our first meeting for the lucidity of his thought, his uprightness, the temper of his character. (…)

His very sure instinct for Christian honor was fortified in him by a profoundly informed knowledge of dishonor and revolutionary deception, a careful and perfectly accurate study of the satanic means devised by the revolution. (…)

11 knew deeply that the revolution is the same in the Church and in the city. As the famous saying goes, the revolution is a block. It is therefore as a block that we must fight it. It will not be defeated in the city unless it is defeated in the Church; it will not be defeated in the Church unless it is defeated in the city. On the other hand, it will not be defeated in the Church until the day when collegiality is broken, Rome will have become Rome’*L

During a visit to Gagnol, Father Calmel tried to show his brother Simon the similarity between the revolutionary laws in France, especially those concerning inheritance in the countryside, and the modernist maneuvers in the Church:

I tried in vain to make my youngest brother understand the mechanisms, the revolutionary apparatus in the Church: collegiality which suppresses personal responsibility and dependence on Rome; recycling and sessions; generalized votes; parallel authorities; “Catholic” press,

J spècial de L’Ordre Fnuifaù sur Louis Damcnic, May 1972. p. 8 9.

“It’s so demonic and unbelievable. It is so demonic and obscure that good people do not understand’*.

Faced with such methods, there is no need to hesitate for a second. All collaboration must be resisted. “The “good” leaders”, those who want to preserve something of the faith of all times, seem to want to keep both sides of the same coin, “to prevent any public act in conformity with Tradition but to contain modernism within certain limits”. This attitude, even if it comes from Rome, “is absurd. You don’t give the revolution its share*. “

- For the love of the Church

In practice, this refusal means sticking to Tradition, without pretending to form a parallel church, but forming small communities that will prepare for the future, whatever it may be. The need for resistance forts was more urgent than ever;

In either case (the imminent end of the world or a renewal of the Church and Christianity), we will take the same course: To fix our eyes so much on Our Lord and on Eternity, to have the courage to attach ourselves to making everything that

deserves it live and prosper, that is to say, what the hierarchical powers of the Church transmit to us - To prepare in this way for future revivals or the Parousia, but not to worry in any way about those who accuse us of schism and persecute us, for however much they may try to frighten us, they will not succeed; We see, in fact, as clear as day, that, seduced by the mirages of Vatican II and turning away from the millenary Tradition, they have attached their hope to a process of decomposition. Neither the renewal of temporal life nor the preparation of the Parousia are on their side, but on ours'*'.

The necessary separations imposed on us by the situation are therefore a consequence of our love for the Church. It is supernatural charity that commands and animates everything:

Jesus is in agony in his Church, we can say at this time. We will therefore watch over the Church in agony - assured that it is indeed the same Church and that we have to be ever more generous, each one in

our position, to live from it and to live in it; this is how we will keep company with Jesus in his agony

Charity will make the difference. This is what Father Calmel called 'resisting in every way for the love of God'".

"In the Church as in the city, on whom can we really count? "Not so much "on those whose character and natural gifts incline them to heroism in the service of just causes," for

“without great love this inclination can turn into terrible pride. What matters in these troubled times are those who, “whatever their character,” love enough to “ask themselves the question of heroic service and who will answer with righteousness. In any case, it is love alone that makes heroes worthy of Jesus, that is, saints.

- The price of fidelity

Is it any wonder that the choices that priests, religious and the faithful must make are painful? For sure, it is this difficulty that discouraged some from effectively opposing the authorities;

We have not refused the suffering that comes from the resolution to be faithful to the Church of all times (especially with regard to the Holy Sacrifice), to be faithful to that Church rather than to give in to ambiguous directions, lacking in juridical clarity, and manifestly contrary to Tradition even though they come from the Pope. We are the Pope’s docile children, but we refuse to be complicit in papal directives that incline to sin because - and there is more than enough evidence - they ruin the Mass by dismantling it of objective guarantees. Others have refused the suffering that is inseparable from fidelity under these conditions. These others wage war against us and accuse us (quite wrongly) of being enemies of the Pope (…) Father X chose long ago never to get into trouble with authority under any pretext.

11 does not forgive those who have not made the same choice”.

A serious question then arose for the priests and the faithful. How far should this rupture go? What did “refusing the new

Mass” mean in concrete terms? What to do when one finds it impossible to attend a Tridentine Mass?

346 Lmrc of January 4, 1971.

347 - A three-day retreat for former students of the Saint-Dominique course in Toulon, December 22-23-24, 1971.

Father Roger-Thomas Calmel

In this practical area, Father Calmel was very careful. In the following text, we can see him torn between inflexible principles and respect for souls, between the will to stand by the humiliated and crucified Jesus and the pastor’s concern not to impose on the weak a yoke that is too heavy. Before being led by the facts to a clearer position, the son of St. Dominic wrote in November 1971 Every Christian must ask himself the question: “What must I do in order not to give my hand to the destruction of love?

Too often priests only provide the faithful with new Masses, which are therefore deprived of sufficient guarantees. The conditions under which the obligation to come to Mass is imposed are not kept.

Not every obligation to attend Mass is abolished, but the obligation to attend Mass, because it relates to a Mass which in itself presents a minimum of guarantees, is suspended. Through the fault of the priests, but above all through the fault of those responsible for the Novus Ordo, the conditions of the legal obligation have been broken [capitalized in the text]. Nevertheless, a very serious obligation persists, an obligation from which no cowardice, no betrayal on the part of the hierarchical authority can exempt us: every Christian remains obliged to confess openly the faith in the Catholic Mass; the Lord even asks him, does him the honor of asking

him, a confession of faith all the more firm because the Mass is exposed to a more serious and insidious peril (p. 8-9).

In the case of dubious Masses, the question does not arise; every member of the faithful must refrain from them. But what is to be done when the celebrant thinks he is allowed to compromise, if he celebrates the Mass "piously" but without adhering to the traditional rite in its entirety? Because legality is broken, it is understandable that "the conduct of the faithful will undergo legitimate variations" (p. 9). This is where Father Calmel believes he can distinguish between those who are strong in the faith, who have sufficient doctrinal formation and lucidity, and the "weak": Some will consider that they have only one means, as far as they are concerned, to confess their faith in the true Mass, to prevent prescription, to prove their attachment to the God of truth who does not tolerate equivocation in the rites of his Church; the only means they consider good, in

these masses still valid, although no longer guaranteed. They do not consider that Our Lord is asking them to bear witness to their faith in the Eucharist by simply withdrawing from this celebration of the Mass, as long as it is still valid (p. 10).

The Father sees the danger that "their attendance at the new Masses (or at least at a small part of them) will become habitual and end up in complicity. For, "if you put your hand in certain gears the whole body will be crushed. The Novus Ordo mhsx can be compared to a relentless gear, precisely calculated to crush the Mass and, with the Mass, the priest" (p. 12). As far as he is concerned, there can be no doubt that he holds to the very clear-cut position of his Declaration, and Ü intends that all the faithful, strong or weak, come to this conclusion: "The normal Catholic Mass, leaving no room for hesitation about the reality of its mystery, totally frank,

offering no possibility of fissure, the good Mass is the Mass of St. Pius V" (p. 13).

However, if he does not believe himself authorized, for the moment, to demand more of the less determined faithful, he asks that they stick to an indisputable minimum, to two practical and "objective" conditions which seem untouchable to him: the Roman canon of St. Pius V recited in Latin and communion in the tongue. For, in this case, it is his conviction, the priest "has observed the minimum required so that the Mass cannot turn out to be anything other than Mass" (p. 14). And he insists on the objectivity of these guarantees. The problem that concerns us is not that of the supposed piety of the priest. It is a question of a rite of the holy Church, which must be "a protective bulwark independent of the particular dispositions of the priest" (p. 14). So, he thinks, when the priest holds the canon unchanged in Latin and communion on the tongue, the priest will return to the entirety of the Mass of St. Pius V, "he will return to the Mass

nchanged", "in use since

(p. 17). Besides, are these "objective" conditions, linked to a public witness to the doctrine and the Mass of all time, so frequent? In any case, they can only be transitory and do not exempt the "weak" from a certain heroism.

In reading this text, one cannot help but think of St. Paul who showed great tolerance for the weak in the question of meats consecrated to idols (Rm 14), or even of Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre who, at that time, held a less clear-cut position than that of Father Calmel. Soon the prelate and the

Dominican would take a clearer position: rather be deprived of Mass, even on Sundays, than actively attend the new Mass, whatever it may be.

The position of the preacher brother was clear enough to be well understood by his confreres. U confided to a correspondent:

My November article enraged old Father Lavaud who had it read to him (he could hardly see it). Poor old Father who did not have the courage to defend what he loved”-…

Moreover, events were to show the harmfulness of the new Mass and to commit priests and faithful to a radical refusal.

Not to say “I am deprived of Mass”, but “I am deprived of Mass”; and

to make this rite impossible? If they succeeded, they know that soon all true mass would be destroyed. It is in this sense that Father Calmel answered Dom Gérard Calvet, prior of the Benedictine priory of Bédoin, who had asked him for a study on

After recalling the nature of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, achieved by the double consecration of bread and wine, which is one, regardless of the number of celebrants, the theologian takes an image, while noting that comparison is not reason:

If to shoot a traitor one gathers a platoon of twelve soldiers, there will certainly be twelve “killing” acts, but the killing is unique. Suppose that there are many traitors, well, the country will be much more effectively helped if each of the soldiers puts to death a traitor than if they group twelve to

kill a single traitor. In the same way, the Church of God will be much more helped (and first of all, God will be much more glorified) if, for example, forty priests each say a mass, than if forty priests join together to make a single consecration, a single mass. (...)

The glory rendered to God, the propitiatory intercession for souls is surely less when there is only one sacramental sacrifice (concelebration) than when there are forty sacramental sacrifices. I say sacramental by distinction from the bloody sacrifice which is unique. But, after these doctrinal developments, the author places the phenomenon of concelebration in its context:

The argument from the present "practice" of the Church, from the practical acceptance of the present Church, is worthless, if at least one has understood that all the innovations of Paul VI are subject to legitimate suspicion; there is legitimate suspicion (at least that) that the present practice is accepted by a merely apparent Church, by the mafia that has colonized (in part) the true Church. This pseudo-Church also approves and encourages the new confessions, the new serial extremes (for the simple reason of having reached 65 years of age, like the vermeil card of the S.N.C.F.)!

354-Letter dated February 18, 1973.

355 ■ Note on concelebration. November 26, 1973.

356. This shows how the practice of concelebration as advocated in the conciliar church comes close to Protestant theology, which denies the sacrificial character of the Holy Mass.

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The weakness of too many “good priests” is to argue endlessly about needle points in order to try to prove to themselves that after all these innovations are perhaps not as poisonous as they are said to be, instead of rejecting modernism as a whole, that is to say, the system of criminal therapeutics by acupuncture based on poison, the dosage of which! is calculated but the final outcome of which is fatal.

These elucidations are rather idle. The ordinary concelebrated Mass is a modernist invention against the true Mass. When modernism dies, we will return to the practice of old.

This is how all the postconciliar innovations should be seen. Each one is only a maneuver in a great war against the Church of all time,

The proof by the facts

The modernists were going to take charge of convincing the faithful of the malice of their reforms. Two examples among thousands will suffice to characterize the novelties. In a large boys’ school run by the reverend Eudist fathers, it was thought advisable to transform the beautiful sanctuary of the large chapel. To do this, they had to break a good number of statues that were part of the architecture. Caught up in some very legitimate scruples, the masons refused to get down to work. The director, a “good” priest by the way, had to take matters into his own hands. 11 broke the first statue himself with a hammer. The workers were thus freed from the embarrassment of a test

The second anecdote is much more serious. The director of a laundry service in a large city came to see the Dominicans. Her job often gave her the opportunity to clean children’s

coats. As is only natural, she systematically searched the pockets before starting to work. On at least two occasions, she said, she found a host at the bottom of a pocket. Was it consecrated? What should she do with it? One can guess her perplexity. Lenfani had simply received the communion in her hand, had put the host in her coat, to see, and had forgotten it there.

Who was at fault? Was it that ignorant toddler? Or was it the priest, the bishop and the pope who had decreed such a rite?

To this universal experience was added, for Father Calincl, that of the decadence of his Order. In January 1970, the Master General organized a great meeting in Prouilhc to modify the constitutions of the nuns and to adjust them to the ideas of the time. A hundred sisters (sixty from Prouilhe and forty from outside) and fifteen fathers of all tendencies

were going to fight for four days to consecrate the gradual abandonment of the rule. Father Calmel thanked the heavens for having been kept away from this “shouting” because of his illness^”.

What sadness it was for the son of St. Dominic to see the upheavals on his return from his long absence. He then wrote with his usual verve:

Prouilhe is being horribly transformed: basilica, porterhouse, chapel of rhôtellerie... A padded coffin where old sisters settle comfortably and where three old fathers organize

themselves as pious little rentiers - at least two of them because Father Behler is now preaching in Europe and polyglot eight months out of the year, and for me… Saint Dominic could not have wanted this comedy. Anyway, I ask him to do the work of a Dominican through my writings and to resurrect his Order”.

These transformations were very expensive. This gave Prouilhe “the impression of a monastery without recruitment but not without money… which transforms and arranges without any real apostolic reason but because they are going in circles”.

As for Father Calmel, he was increasingly sidelined. He came to the point where he could only celebrate Mass in the porter’s house, because the prioress had forbidden him to celebrate Mass in the convent. I would rather deprive the community of mass,” she had told him, “than to call on yours. “But since U was celebrating earlier, the sisters who had to go out attended. “I see all the sisters going to the dentist! “he said to his friends. Sometimes the prioress, in order to have masses according to her taste, called upon a very fanciful Benedictine who was not to the taste of the fart Rzewuski either. Only Father Calmel had the courage to react. One fine day, he pounded his fist on the table, crying out, “Saint Dominic cannot tolerate this. “

In August 1971, he was able to see five or six fathers in Prouilhe who were returning from the General Chapter. He noted the general sluggishness and decadence. Among all the capitulars “only one, a Czech, will perhaps (is it sure?) have the will to defend Latin in TOrdrc^”.

359-Letter of 23 April 1971.

360-Letter of August 31, 1971.

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In 1972, the nuns pushed “progress” to the point of accepting in slow

to arrange these meetings without the knowledge of father Rzewusici. But this one, informed in time and “forbade (of course) that nobody communicated to the cult of these heretics

The more time passed, the more he felt that only a miracle could save the Order of Saint Dominic from sinking. To whom could he ask for this miracle, if not to the Immaculate Heart of Mary? He therefore decided to write to the Master General “so that he would have this miracle requested in an official act for our Order”.

May the General lend an ear,” he wrote with candor, “but it is certain that it is pleasing to our Mother that we ask her for miracles. The question was not an idle one, indeed, for Father Calmel could see “from experience (and with growing peace) that most of the fathers (through cowardice and imbecility) have set out on the path of changing religion and are leading their neighbors into it

Nevertheless, the depth and scope of the crisis did not prevent Gagnol’s Hls from remaining himself, willingly combining sharp jabs with a simple and frank sense of humor. He wrote in 1973:

Passage (in Prouilhe) of zany Fathers of a zaniness by conditioning; incurable. Our Lady keeps me cheerful; it is a

very precious good, a sure reflection of the peace in Jesus. May Our Lady always keep me in this cheerfulness.

Moreover, his positions and observations did not prevent him from maintaining courteous and even fraternal relations with his prior, Father Rzewusici. It was, according to one witness, “the peaceful cohabitation of people who thought differently. The Polish Father wrote to him several times and called him kindly during his serious illness. He even visited him in Cotignac in July 1970. “Calmel wrote in September 1970, and in October 1972, “He is visibly happy to see me again. Depressed by the decadence of the Order, the Polish prior found some consolation in the always very spiritual talks of Fr.

361-Letter of August 1972.

362 - Letter dated September 24, 1972.

363 - Letter of July 31, 1973. The words were not excessive. A contemporary Dominican had to admit later: “We have to recognize that the time (the 1970s) when we went from a convent to a monastery was a time of great change.

Miguel Garrigues, By tightened tenlims. Presses de la Renaissance).

Father Calmel. And he appreciated the latter’s doctrinal rigor as a counterweight to modernist influences.

Apart from his original mannerisms, Father Rzewusld is a typical example of those good, spiritual, conservative priests who mourned the excesses of the revolution without having

the strength to analyze the principles or to effectively oppose them. The example of the death of a nun in Prouilhe provides a good illustration. Following the good visit of his prior, Father Calmel wrote:

Rzesvuski’s perfect visit: the only topic of conversation was the death of mother Agnes in 48 hours, an intestinal occlusion. Father had tears in his eyes. She was actually killed by the revolution in the monastery, but she did not know how to react, and then she died, only 73 years old. I will never understand why Father Rzewuski, out of pity for sisters like Mother Agnes, did not fight until he was exhausted. It would have been perhaps the breakup of the monastery, but that is infinitely better than letting poor people consecrated to God die choked in the mud of a swamp. For Paul VI will have allowed the holy Church of God to be invaded by the swampy waters of immanent apostasy. Finally, I do not have to judge Father Rzewuski, but to beg that I be faithful until death in the way that the Lord shows me and which is quite different: the way of the struggle opened in the greatest possible clarity; the way of St. Joan and St. Pius X. For the crisis did not affect only the Dominican Order. In the whole Church there was this tornado which swept everything away and which only strengthened Father Calmel in his categorical refusal of any collaboration. In his letters and in his instructions, he helped his people to understand the current situation.

In October 1970, some people thought they were already seeing a slowing down of the liturgical decadence. The Dominican put them on guard:

The decree that “puts an end to liturgical experiences” is exactly like that of communion in the hand, that is to say, contradictory; “no more experience… however if… however in such and such a case… “What remains to be done is to

cling to Tradition, praying to Our Lady and in the certain hope that the Lord will intervene on the marked day.

In France in particular, collegiality was showing its revolutionary face and was already imposing the tyranny of the “assembly of Lourdes”. A bishop who loves Jesus does not accept to transform his power of government, which is personal, to make it collegial, *i.e.* anonymous, thus lending himself to all the aberrations of the “college”, *i.e.* the assembly of Lourdes. Not only because of the honest pride of exercising his office, but even more because of his love for Jesus who gave him this office, for the love of the Church which has specified its mode of exercise and refuses to enter into a new regime. But the bishops do not love the High Priest enough to continue to exercise their office as he asks of them.

Father Calmel emphasized in his time the transformation of the composition of the conclave that would elect the future pope. Limiting the age of the cardinaui, Paul VI excluded twenty-five of them, not appointed by him, thus orienting the next elections

It was objected that the reigning pope defended traditional morality. In a certain way yes, but in the name of what principles?

He says the right thing (on abortion), but in the name of civilization and then of conscience - but not of the natural law (these are Masonic speeches). - Without claiming to be God and the Savior Jesus Christ - (an agnostic can say as much as Paul VI). - And when the conscience is distorted

In April 1972, the scandal of Taizé, where the Protestants had adopted the Eucharistic prayers of the new Mass, allowed Father Calmel to expose the betrayal that the liturgical reform meant. It was proof by facts for those who had not yet understood:

Let Catholic priests once and for all renounce wearing the disguises prepared by treacherous hierarchs to accommodate heretical preachers. Let them refuse to say Mass with the Novus Ordo, since this Novus Ordo, with its calculated dismantling of the formulary and the rites, has become what it was destined to become: a book

3éé -Letter of January 31, 1971.

- Letter dated October 20, 1970. Interview of January 31, 1971.

liturgical service for the use of heretical officiants who do not believe in the Mass and who are not priests".

In September 1972, a new aggression against Tradition had to be deplored:

No more tonsure, no more subdiaconate; we start with the diaconate; and the ministry of the Eucharist (communion of the sick, distribution of communion) can be entrusted to the laity: and the national conferences (collegiate) will be able to extend all this. It is the modernist system of devaluation and ruin of the priesthood that is at work through Paul VI

In December 1972, Father Calmel wrote a severe criticism of a declaration made by Mgr Guyot, Archbishop of Toulouse,

on November 24, 1972, in which the prelate tried to justify his liberality in the name of the “calls of Vatican II”. The Dominican saw the day coming when married priests would be completely accepted and when “the ‘Masses’ will have become ‘cènes’ and ‘intercommunions’”.

The upheavals that followed the Council were now producing their effects in broad daylight. It became clear to the strong and the weak alike that, in order to survive, they had to disassociate themselves from this devastating movement. Father Calmel summarized the reaction of many in a private letter:

As for X’s grievance: “They call us nuts, fanatics, etc., and we shouldn’t. “This does not hold water. It is all too obvious that those who resist modernism, intractably, come across as disobedient, irredeemable, backward, *etc.* X must learn to ignore this nonsense. That is the eighth Beatitude. (…)

When one has seen in front of one’s face what the modernist Masses have led to in the last three years (no more), when one has seen the general decomposition of the clergy in three years (I measured it at Prouilhe with the passage of the fathers between July 20 and August 20), one can easily admit that the Lord is asking us not to give any guarantee to the modernist Masses, to affirm - by our abstention - that the Mass is an absolute and that we are the ones who have the right to say it.

370 - “Illusory Eucharist in Taizé”. Itineraries n. 162, a of God, 1.1. The Mass. NEL.p. 125-137.

371 - Letter of 15 September 1972.

372 - Letter of 12 December 1972.

Till972.p.56ctsv..(“

could not bring to it the relativity, fantasy, equivocation introduced by Paul VI (from which it pleases the Lord to deliver the Church)

Quelejues fortins of resistance

The message was very well received by some religious communities” and by various groups of lay people. In Lorraine, Father Calmel encouraged the small Confrérie Saint-Jean, a pious association of a few faithful, to remain firm in the law. In the same vein, he expressed the wish that the Compagnons £Itinéraires would transform themselves into a sort of third order to unite militant resistance with an intense spiritual life.

It is in this sense also that he visited the school of La Pétaudière. He preached there during Holy Week in 1970, very happy to hear the Gloria Laos sung by children’s voices. He returned there for Holy Week in 1971, and again the following September, where he stayed for several weeks. This secluded place gave him the opportunity to pray, write and rest. Sure of being understood, Father Calmel allowed himself a few jokes, such as mimicking Father Guérard des Lauriers, whom he said was capable of explaining the mystery of the Holy Trinity with algebraic equations, or allowing himself to make a pun on some ecclesiastic. He liked to recite some of Shakespeare’s famous phrases with a terrible accent and even tried to play the flute, without much success it seems.

During his short conferences, Father Calmel sought to awaken the vigilance of his young audience against modern errors. He did so in his own elegant, yet unapologetic way:

With all the supernatural clarity with which he was usually inhabited, he exposed to us the elucidations of the dark spirits who plot to make us lose our faith; this clarification was already their loss. The error thus exposed appeared to us like a well-stretched balloon. It was then that the witty and malicious smile announcing the fatal pinprick appeared on the face of our theologian: a

373-Letter dated August 31, 1973.

374 - At the very beginning of 1971, the prioress of the Carmelite nuns of Draguignan asked Father Calmtl to stay with them as chaplain, so that they could keep the traditional Mass.

Dulac, “Les génocides des carmélites françaises”, Uinéraira n” 155. July-August 1971. p. 34 51. 375-Letter of January 12, 1971.

376 - “I have just played a flute tune; or rather, tried out a few notes. There is nothing left for me to learn. It must be possible for SC to do this, even for me” (Letter of September 29, 1971).

The effect was so astonishing that people laughed and his bright blue eyes gleamed with pleasure at the result. Then, looking half-famous, half-confused, he seemed to say modestly: I can’t help it, it just clicked. This small, diaphanous man, who seemed to have already a part of himself in the other world, tested by the terrible nosebleeds which weakened him more and more each year, was in reality a “champion” of God

Father Calmel left at La Pétaudière the memory of “a religious saint who loved his Order passionately, especially because he found that the personality of its members was respected’™”.

Certainly, he judged it preferable that “religious (priests or not) and nuns take in hand true Christian schools”, because of the grace proper to their eongregations, but he said he was “happy to help these boys”, 11 could encourage at least one or two of them “to enter Archbishop Lefebvre’s house. God be blessed. (…) God’s blessing on the house is visible; Luce Quenctte will have allowed several vocations to be formed and preserved, and that is the essential ■’™. “

Another pole of resistance was to benefit from Father Calmel’s zeal from that time on. Having given his signature and address to Father Coache’s Vademecum, a winegrower from the Narbonne region, Mr. Cathala, came to visit him in Prouilhe accompanied by a friend. Seeing their determination, the Dominican was able to speak frankly to his visitors: “Do not participate in the new Mass, set yourself apart, for they will make you lose your faith. (…) In order to defend the Mass of St. Pius V, the priests must celebrate it, and you must participate in it. “He would get angry, moreover, when someone said before him: “I will attend Mass. ” One does not attend the Mass, he would cry out, one participates in it. “

So he came to celebrate mass at Mr. Cathala’s house. When he arrived at the house, after the usual greetings, he went up to his room. There, he set the scene: he placed an image of Fra Angelieo, for whom he had an immense devotion, and one of his parents. After two or three Sundays when he celebrated Holy Mass in Narbonne, Father Calmel said to his hosts: “That’s not right. Set up a chapel. “Mr. Cathala felt he could give him a sensible answer: “Build a chapel - it is not

impossible. But why bother? We don’t have a priest. “We don’t have a priest,” he said.

377 - Riul OU ion. Lettre Je Lt Pér,tiijière n” 63. October 1975.

378 - Letter from Bernard Giroud of July 21, 1995, see Z,rf/rei/e4i/*“vïW/èren”63. October 1975.

replied the Dominican. The chapel is your concern. The priest is a matter for Providence. “So a chapel was built, first of all in the old chapter house of the friars of the Holy Spirit. And, indeed, not once until today has the traditional chapel of Narbonne lacked priests. Father Calmel came there several times, but also Father Sineux o.p.*, on his trips to and from Bordeaux to Bédoin, where he gave courses to the monks of Dom Gérard, then Father Guérard des Lauriers o.p. and Father Simon.

In his concern for the formation of forts of resistance, Father Calmel greatly encouraged the founding of the Confraternity of the White Penitents in Narbonne, which had disappeared for 70 years and was reborn in 1971. But with his acute sense of subversion, he warned them: “Don’t be infiltrated. “Here are the impressions that the preacher brother left during his visits to Narbonne:

He had remained a peasant at heart. He had unimaginable common sense. Being a Dominican had not changed anything he had received on his father’s farm. The pig dealers would not have been right with him.

He celebrated mass in a striking way. He often kept his eyes closed. His face, which was very lively when he spoke, remained frozen in impassivity. Between each prayer in the missal he would pause for a moment.

A diocesan priest said of him and his articles in Itinéraires, “Father Calmel, we feared him. “

The Dominican had few illusions about the fragility of these strongholds of resistance. What mattered to him was that they were healthy and living cells of the Church, living as much as they could in the light and grace of Tradition. He wrote to one of his directors in June 1971: “Our forts are tiny. But it is the whole Church - Apostles, martyrs, virgins and confessors - which is present and which resists in each of our strongholds; and the angels watch over our ramparts”.

The double temptation

Let us recognize that Father Calmel’s ministry to these well-disposed souls was relatively easy and could provide him with profound consolations. However, there was another audience awaiting his enlightenment and advice, that of the timid souls, of those priests or laity who preferred the path

of compromise. For if it was relatively easy to see that a great number of men of the Church had broken with Tradition, it was much more difficult to distance oneself radically from the general movement. The temptation was strong to try at all costs to avoid painful separations.

The danger of these middle ways was however obvious to Father Calmel. The sad story of the Carmelite convent in

Draguignan, which Father Dulac had tried to save, showed him this

In this regard, the Dominican warned against the position of the Silent Ones of the Church, led by Pierre Debray (whose real name was Coué), who, despite his generosity, lacked formation and judgment, and was under the influence of Cardinal Daniélou. He tried to defend “the good cause”, but without defining it too much, and above all “without having any problems”;

Its great interest, from the point of view of the bishops and Daniélou, is to gather a crowd of “traditionalists” who imagine that from the Council one must take what is good (but according to what criteria?), that one must accept the reforms, but without excess, *etc.*

In short, all those good people who are certainly not revolutionaries but who, not having seen or not wanting to see that the revolution is a block, believe that one can do the “right thing” to the revolution, - especially since it is blessed by Rome. - Salvation will not come from the gathering of the Silent Ones, and these poor people will go from disappointment to disappointment.

To hold the good mass, to be faithful to the rosary, to maintain the good catechism; this is what is within our reach and that God asks for, and that he will bless. Large gatherings in the dark: useless “L

This position of the Silent Ones (“who make noise”) “for the reform of Paul VI and of the Council, but against its deviations and subaltern excesses” certainly wished to be “convenient and free of perils “S>, but without a way out. In this regard, Father Calmel said to a friend: these good people and those who imitate them “are our worst enemies,

because they have the color of Tradition but they do not go all the way”.

The International Office was to take the same direction. Jean Ousset, “to keep his clientele, because that is the bottom line of everything”, had refused to officially promise that the Mass of the 1972 Lausanne Congress would be the “International Office”.

Father Roger-Thomas Calmel

mass of Saint Pius V. It is true that the list of participants included priests faithful to the Tridentine rite, and even His Excellency Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre, but the ambiguity was deliberately maintained. It was not known what the official Mass would be. Father Guérin, who had opted for the Latin Mass of Paul VI, would be responsible for the liturgy of the congress.

On the other hand, Jean Ousset was explicitly asked to deal with topics related to “violence in the Church at the time of the new Mass and the new catechisms. It was normal and possible to treat this theme. “But the director of the Office clearly refused. Faced with this double rebuff, that of the official Mass and that of the subjects treated, Jean Madiran officially withdrew his participation in the Lausanne congress.

The refusal of the new Mass and the fight against novelties was not an optional choice. It was a question of faith and even of the Christian spirit, of the definition of the Church and of Christianity. On this subject, Father Calmel warned: “Let us not become rigid, but let us beware of the world as St. John says. Since Ousset excluded to resist on the mass, since then the world has necessarily entered in his organism”.

Was it necessary to deprive ourselves of the ministry of any priest who, while having adopted the new Mass, would keep the doctrine of the past? This was a very practical question for those who organized prayer or study groups.

In a provincial town, the head of such a study circle had invited a Benedictine “agitated and talkative (…) with whom Archbishop Lefebvre is not very pleased”, and then a Dominican, certainly not a modernist, a good religious, but who had “never taken sides with the good Mass”. When asked about this, Father Calmel replied:

Alas, I know both of them personally. (…) They do not have what it takes to arm the faithful in a crisis of exceptional gravity. The more one sees the gravity of the crisis, the more one wants to pray, to study the truths of faith - but not to get agitated.

With the great modernist offensive, a certain number of religious, who in normal times would have had a peaceful job, suddenly found themselves unemployed. They have not had the courage to strengthen themselves in Tradition for all that. They are sitting between two chairs. (…) Certainly, it is not enough that a priest says the right Mass. (…) If we

> - Entrccicn of the months of January c

; 1972.

never compromised for the mass. (…) How can priests who are (basically) cowards, who don’t want history, arm and support young people or Catholics who have been drawn and quartered? How, with the (orthodox I suppose) talks of priests who don’t want to risk anything, can lay people be persuaded to risk everything for the sake of the Mass and the catechism? (…) A word, even a correct one, from a priest

who has risked nothing for the Mass, does not risk, at the present time, to support and arm the Christians in disarray

Were such demands realistic? Above all, did not such doctrinal rigor and the fear of compromise with new things entail the risk of schism, of the formation of a kind of parallel church, of the creation of an artificial collective of pure people who would soon cut themselves off from the Church of Christ? This was the second temptation that threatened the defenders of Tradition.

Such a prospect would have horrified Father Calmel. As soon as large gatherings of the Catholic faithful took shape, such as the Corpus Christi processions in Montjavoult or the pilgrimages to Rome, the Dominican warned his people. It is quite legitimate that Catholics who are worried or indignant about the drift of the hierarchy should meet from time to time to pray and find spiritual comfort, but there is no question of organizing a gathering of all Catholics faithful to Tradition, a sort of collective that would unite all forces under the same banner.

In 1972, the case of the pilgrimage to Rome gave Father Calmel the opportunity to express his point of view. He did so publicly in the fourth chapter of his Brief Apology for the Church of All Time, which will be discussed shortly.

The pilgrimages of 1970 and 1971 had been true movements of prayer and penance.

Jean Madiran, was held back only by his very bad state of health.

Things changed considerably at the end of the year, prompting Father Calmel to explicitly advise “Hi

aostenir: ^

Antico took in hand this pilgrimage to make it other chnc . than a pilgrimage of prayers to beg the saint to defend the mass and to support the papacy. In these circumstances, it is worth considering going. Redouble your fervor in your fortin’ ‘cést’tout” What was it about?

Jean Madiran wrote an account of this affair in the January 1972 issue of Neraires. He recalled that “the first two pilgrims were not the only ones.

Elisabeth Gerstner, seconded in particular by Father Coache” n, it was learned at the end of 1971 that from now on, “the general direction of the P”>^‘“age is entrusted to the international secretariat Pro Ecclesia Roman, Cathohca (P.E.R.C.)”. The news caused a sensation among the various groups involved. All the more so since the association was presented as the “great Catholic alliance of movements and personalities faithful to Tradition *”.

In the Roman periodical Vigilia romana (n. 7-8, 1971, p. 5), the secretary general of the P.E.R.C., Dr. Franco Antico, protested that he only wanted to act “in a spirit of humility and service”, and that he intended to “guarantee each one his freedom”, and to rely on the prayers of all and on charity. However, he did not hide his intention to “conclude a pact of alliance between those who believe and work for the cause of God on earth”, and to carry out “a global, permanent, simultaneous action”. To those who saw the danger of such an initiative, he made a specious argument:

But there is also another danger which is that (...) of having an almost instinctive repugnance for everything that wants

to be unity, collaboration, mutual help, reciprocal understanding, as if to agree had become a crime. This is “the original traditionalist sin”; it manifests itself in an absurd particularism, in an exasperated individualism.

Pilcrinagc, a delegation approached the Holy Father in favor of the freedom of the traditional Mass. In spite of their request, they were not received by the pope.

388 - Letter dated 24 January 1972. r v f K f

389 - Combat de la Foi, n* 16, page 3.

We do not have their courage, but we have the simplicity of their intention. We are going to ask Almighty God, through the intercession of Our Lady, Mother of the Church, and through the intercession of the holy popes, especially St. Peter, St. Pius V, and St. Pius X, for the preservation of the integral Holy Mass, of the catechism of the Council of Trent, and of the inviolate Scriptures.

Such a warning delighted Father Calmel. For beyond the delicate question of authority, the very nature of the Church was at stake. Any “collective” of Catholics faithful to Tradition would ultimately be an artificial fabrication of a human brain, a kind of party among Christians. It would be at best only a part of the Church. Whereas the true Tradition that we must defend and that must nourish us is the Church itself; the Tridentine Mass is the Mass of the Latin Church.

Ultimately, the proper response to the onslaught of modernism in the Church is to be what we are, to stand on the wall that has been entrusted to us, modestly, quite simply.

This was the message that the Dominican had been trying to get across to the Abbot of Nantes for years. Certainly, the

Father appreciated the qualities of the abbot, but he was afraid of the mission that he was giving himself as “head of the league”, and as universal guide of the faithful of the Tradition.

Moreover, the abbot seemed to listen to the advice of his elder. Under his influence he agreed to “transform at last! his meetings on Vatican III!!! into preaching of the faith, followed by real masses. (…) And this kind of preaching is

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This ministry was certainly more thankless but it nourished and strengthened souls. Unfortunately, the will to succeed pushed the abbot of Nantes into the path of compromise:

As for the poor man from Nantes, I would think that he turns his eyes a little to Roman “characters” (oh! very properly, certainly, and “in the Tradition”, but with measure): and this “human respect” will suffice to divert him from a true preaching to the simple faithful people, because this ministry has no chance, in general, to be applauded by ecclesiastical “personalities”. I would like to be wrong”.

The methods of the Abbé de Nantes did not suit Father Calmel’s modesty at all, but he recognized their value:

The Abbot of Nantes had the priests who were faithful to the good Mass applauded at the Mutuality: Guérard des Lauriers, myself, *etc.* And he must go to Rome to ask Paul VI to retract his statement.) I wrote to him that the approach is good but on the condition that he officially asks those who trust him for a precise daily prayer (daily rosary, three angeluses). Otherwise, poor kid, would he imagine that a much greater victory than that of Lepanto (the liberation of the Church) could be won by praying less than we prayed during the battle of Lepanto”? However, the “Tabbé de Nantes’ uproar” had its interest, that of “clearing the ground: the bishops are terrified of it; “Rome” is embarrassed to note that in France “it no longer works alone”. So the postconciliar straitjacket was obliged to loosen a little because of this action. “However, “the Abbot does not build much on this cleared

ground. And because he is too eager to put himself forward, it is difficult for him to invite many to prayer and conversion. Still, he helps a number of people understand that living the Church (which we must do) does not involve (on the contrary) following a bad pope and a bad council. But from a bad pope only prayer can deliver “

It is not personal success that we must seek, but the truth.

The more or less successful attempts of some and others to keep and defend the faith helped Father Calmel to confirm and clarify his own

392 - Letter of November 13, 1972.

393 - Letter of December 15, 1972.

positions. But soon, he would find a master in the one who would be placed, in spite of himself, at the head of the survival of the Tradition.

Archbishop Lefebvre

Father Calmel had met Archbishop Lefebvre in August 1963 in Pontcallec. Since then, the prelate and the Dominican had had a few exchanges by letter. We have seen how he addressed him on the occasion of the promulgation of the new Mass. As soon as he received bad news about Archbishop Lefebvre’s health, Father Calmel prayed intensely and had people pray for him. From February 2 to 11, he made a novena for the prelate, who was in a clinic at the time, and was soon able to rejoice in his recovery

On July 16, 1970, Archbishop Lefebvre gave a conference at the Sainte-Marguerite school, part of the Saint-Dominique

course in Toulon. The doctrinal certainty, the supernatural spirit, the prudence and the serenity of the prelate impressed Father Calmel a lot.

The prelate began by underlining the role of “cardinals opposed to Tradition, in particular Liénart, Frings, Alffink, Suenens” in the preparation and in the course of the Council. The Council “was in fact dominated by a faction, organized in advance,” which sought to modify essential points of Catholic doctrine: “The faction coined new words or imposed a new meaning on old terms. “

Through this process, “collegiality” (a new term) made it possible to reach and undermine the hierarchical structure of the Church, a structure of personal power with the primacy of one. Ibecumenism (old term, but loaded with a new meaning) allowed to relativize the dogmas; religious freedom (old term loaded with a new meaning) allowed to fight the principle of a publicly and legally Christian nation; as for the renewed liturgy, it was obviously a tear of universal destruction, since the Christian necessarily and usually uses the sacraments to live of Christ

The process of breaking down the received doctrinal formulation was relatively simple; shouting at the top of one’s voice that one is doing pastoral work and nothing more; defining nothing, condemning nothing; instead of going from the implicit to the explicit, bringing back to the vague what was already explicit.

Unfortunately,

à

the major intervention of the two popes, in a move unheard of in the entire history of the papacy (two thousand years, twenty councils), was to impose silence, shortly after the beginning, on those cardinals who were members of the Curia - and therefore who, by position and conviction, defended the traditional theses. - This prohibition did not fail to produce the expected effect: the immense majority of bishops, poorly educated and indifferent to sound doctrine, considered that the popes were no longer attached to Tradition and gave their votes to the innovators.

We know the consequences; authority ceases to be personal. It is the community, it is the number that designates and decides, (…)

Another consequence: in the name of religious liberty, those states which are still Christian and which intend to protect the faith of their citizens (who are all baptized), which consider faith as a public good, are fought by the Vatican: see the slap given by Pope Paul VI to the head of the Portuguese state. (…) The Vatican does absolutely nothing for the hundreds of thousands of Christians in Czechoslovakia who have been deported and tortured since last year. Why is this so? Because the scheme on religious freedom was intended as a war machine to fight the Christian states and to legitimize a pro-communist policy. (…)

But what if the Council is assisted by the Holy Spirit? Understand that the Holy Spirit does not have to intervene in a council that is outside of definitions and condemnations. The Council took such a position, a position ignored by the twenty previous Councils, that the Holy Spirit’s assistance could only be very general, i.e., not formally teaching error. The Holy Spirit would have intervened to prevent the composition of texts with an

erroneous tendency only if the Fathers had intended to exclude this tendency, which could only be done by anathemas; yet, from the beginning, they refused any anathema. The aim is obvious: to destroy the supernatural in religion; to align ourselves with Protestantism (…) We do not have to precipitate the movement of independence with regard to collegiate bishops, but it would be neither wise nor Christian to allow ourselves to be tied down by prohibitions which, in fact, would leave all the latitude to the apostates, and would want to bind the faithful. The more sacrilegious group Masses multiply, the less hesitation there will be to hold Masses in the homes of faithful Christians, without going to the local bishop to ask for a paper.

After the conference, Father Calmel was able to have a private meeting with

t this holy Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre", where the future was discussed. The domini

The bishop continues to seek canonical means to have his seminarians ordained. He hopes to succeed. In any case, he will do what he can to remain within the law. But if one day this becomes impossible, he will not hesitate for a second to ordain himself; the ordination will certainly be c'alide.

The overall outcome of this battle is further proof of the accuracy of Father Calmel's judgment:

Rarely have I met a bishop who was less of a daredevil and more solid than Archbishop Lefebvre. This confirms my first impression during the long meeting in Brittany in August 1963. I saw more clearly that it would be unfair to ask this bishop to write books or even to publish articles. He is above

all a man of government, a man of God who fulfills like a saint a governing office in the Church,

The following August, Father Calmel was again able to have a “blessed meeting with Archbishop Lefebvre “*, where they were able to exchange their thoughts on the situation of the Church and on the solution of the crisis. The content of the meeting has not remained with us. We do know, however, that the Dominican begged the holy bishop not to be satisfied with the great work he had undertaken, which was the Society of St. Pius X, but to manifest himself more publicly.

He sent a letter to Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre so that he would take the lead and speak, he first, to the Christian people. Instead of allowing himself to be put

What weapons did he have at his disposal? What is the good fight of faith?

Weapons of light

At the height of the fight for the defense of the truth, Father Calmel saw the danger of mistaken strategy and of falling into the traps set by the enemy. He explained to one of his spiritual daughters:

Tradition: keep it, but don’t just keep it, feed on it. It has made the saints. To be close enough to God so that even if we have to fight, struggle, defend ourselves, separate ourselves, it is with a heart united to God - without hardening. - It is a danger, it is our danger to harden ourselves, to stand up to organizations that secularize

religion, that destroy faith, that allow morals to be corrupted. We must fight, but with weapons of light. We must pray a lot so that Our Lady prevents our hearts from becoming hardened*.

The first of these “weapons of light” is the Cross.

-The suffering

For the gigantic task that mobilized the zeal of the preacher brother in this time of apostasy, one would have wished him to have iron health and a resistance to any test. But the good Lord gave Roger Calmel a very fragile health from his birth. At the age of fifteen, he suffered his first heart problems. Then an ill-defined illness forced him to interrupt his novitiate at Saint-Maximin so that he could undergo examinations in Lyon. Later, his health became worrisome, precisely at the time of the promulgation of the new Mass. It was through illness and the painful experience of physical exhaustion that he had to fight for the Church.

We remember that Father Calmel had to be rushed to the clinic on the very day of his historic declaration, November 11, 1969. Apparently recovered from this initial scare, he was able to resume his ministry. The improvement was short-lived. On January 1, 1970, he became ill again, with very low blood pressure. On the 4th, he fell ill at the Metz train station, due to his great fatigue and a weak heart.

As a result of this, and as a consequence of the various blood transfusions he had undergone, he contracted a serious case of hepatitis on January 25. Alarmed by

ois of May 1973.

Mass in the trenches

his pitiful state, Mother Hélène and Mother Marie-François Dupouy came to Prouilhe to take him by train to Toulon. From there, they drove him to Cotignac in a 2CV. A good lady, a former Carmelite nun, M”’ Matthieu, put at his disposal a small house in La Colle, at the foot of the hill of NotreDame-des-Grâces. This elderly lady (“the ancient lady” as Father Calmel called her) rendered him great services. He stayed there for about six months.

At the height of his illness, the religious had turned to Our Lady of Victories, the little Thérèse and Father Berto (“whom I prayed to a great deal to heal”, letter of January 28). Believing he was already out of the woods, he thanked his heavenly benefactors on January 26.

From Toulon, Dominican mothers, especially Mother Hélène, visited her every day and spent a good hour in her company. This was the occasion for deep exchanges about the spiritual life, the education of young girls and the crisis in the Church.

The fresh air of Provence and the rest did Father Calmel good, and he was able to go to La Péraudière for Holy Week and then visit his friends in Lorraine. But in April, he suffered a terrible toothache that lasted 48 hours. “The dentist said that it was an arthritic attack in the jaw… I don’t understand it. (…) It’s very simple: nothing to understand my health. There too I only have to

In his serious health crises, he could not help thinking about death. To a nun who came to visit him, he said: “I am 56 years old, my daughter, and I think that the Lord, the just judge, could ask me for an account of my life. “And he advised her to speak to the sisters about death and judgment: “What will you bring on the last day? On what will he judge us? What have we risked for him?

In May, he had a relapse which forced him to seek asylum in Toulon, at the Sainte-Marguerite school. He is literally exhausted: “Jaundice produces a kind of exhaustion that I did not know yet: a perpetual torpor, without any desire to do anything, to read anything, to write anything”. “He sees, however, the finger of God in all this:

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What I find providential in this illness (…) is the ease with which I have peace, prayer and recollection. (…) Perhaps never since Castelnau (Christmas 50) have I enjoyed such favorable conditions”.

The thing that costs me the most is the kind of paralysis of the spirit that this evil inflicts on you. I think my heart is still set on God and that’s the only thing that matters, really

My prayer is reduced to very little. I will lie down and doze: this is my poor prayer for the moment ■’®.

In June 1971, although he could boast of having regained a sufficient number of red blood cells, he had to deplore a liver in poor condition which caused him constant bitterness and excessive salivation. He had to give up the pilgrimage to Rome that Jean Madiran had offered to pay for. In September, he was taken over by dizziness that made him almost lose his balance during mass.

In January 1972, the nasal haemorrhages which had calmed down a little started again. He wonders: “I don’t know if I should attribute these enmiis to the breathlessness that sometimes takes me; to palpitations that sometimes come but without lasting; to congenital vascular fragility; to all three combined”. This is the occasion for him of new weaknesses and a heavy incapacity to study.

In February 1973, Father Calmel suffers from new cardiac problems and a serious anemia, and has to undergo two new

blood transfusions. He notes with supernatural wit and a touch of humor:

The most important thing is to fulfill with gentleness the office that the Lord asks us to fulfill: for me, it is the office of a sick person more than a preacher, for the moment.

Finally this violent flu (more than 40°. head that “decelerates” you, tiredness,..) will give way, I hope, little by little, in front of an old-fashioned medication: bed, bed, still bed; diuretic and transpiring borage tea upon borage tea. - Thank you to Our Lady for this holy week”.

In May, he could finally look forward to some improvement. But on October 17, 1973, he experienced a crisis more alarming than ever and of a strange nature. Mother Hélène testifies:

404-Letter of May 18, 1970.

405 - Letter of May 21, 1970.

406-Letter of January 26, 1972. 407-Letter of Holy Tuesday, 1973.

Last night, the Father was suddenly in such danger that he asked for a priest. (...) Following a shot for a beginning flu, he had what I believe to be a syncope, nothing to do, he says, with a simple fainting spell:

I will take advantage of this strange and unforeseen crisis to live even closer to the Lord. At least that is my greatest desire. (...) How one longs for the Lord to sanctify us totally

and without delay when one sees the unpredictable way in which he can call us back to himself. - Never before have I had this experience of the soul at the edge of the body'".

Thank God, after having been "on the verge of death", Father Calmel was able to recover quite quickly and resume his work, albeit at a slower pace. Until his death, he had to carry this cross of exhaustion.

- Humility

From a human point of view, the weakness of the preacher brother seemed to disqualify him from the battles of the day. In reality, it placed him in the front lines. Not only because of the grace of the interior life with which God graced him, nor even only insofar as his illness united him to the suffering Christ, but also because it fostered in him a profound humility.

All the witnesses are unanimous. Father Calmel, who defended with honor and firmness the doctrine of the Church, was of a deep humility and of great singing. In order to help confused or weak souls, he was ready to suffer all kinds of humiliations.

One day the Dominican was invited to participate in a small study session organized by some people from Versailles in a large residence in the Chevreuse Valley. On Sunday morning, he celebrated Holy Mass in the oratory of the property. After lunch, which was attended by about ten people, there was a discussion about the crisis in the Church. Some participants asked Father Calmel questions to which he gave clear answers. Some went further, however, and some wanted to push him to say what he did not have to say or did not want to say. In defiance of the most elementary laws of politeness and respect, they assailed the

religious with indiscreet questions, while he was suffering from a nasal haemorrhage which he mopped up with several sprays.

408 - Letter from Mother Hélène Jamet, October 18, 1973.

handkerchiefs. In this situation which was becoming intolerable, Father Calmel kept a great calm. One of the guests had to intervene forcefully: “How will you treat a bad priest if you treat a good priest like that? It is unbearable’”. “

In these years 1970-1971, Dom Gérard Calvet came to visit Father Calmel in Prouilhe, accompanied by his first novice.

The young Benedictine had been fascinated by the texts of the friar preacher, by his articles in Itinéraires and by his first books. What a surprise when he first saw this sickly, puny Dominican, as if crushed by some heavy worry, speaking little and in a manner that was not very audible. “What a contrast between this character and his writings, so luminous! “

The two visitors were invited to share lunch with Fathers Rzewuski, Calmel and Labourdette. The latter was imposing by his size and his appearance. He willingly mocked his tired and ill confrere, perhaps not to the point of strictly offending charity, but enough to annoy the two Benedictine guests who were used to more respectful manners. Father Calmel seemed to pay no attention to these jokes, and “he showed an edifying humility. He kept silent, got up, cleared the table and served. “The Benedictine prior presented his young monastery. When he broached the question of rising at night, Father Calmel retorted, “Be careful, you’ll kill your monks! “

The Benedictine novice retained from his visit the impression of a strength and wisdom inhabiting a frail and sickly being. It was not human strength, nor pride of race that threw this religious into the battles of the present time, it was a motion from elsewhere: “He was combative because he was enlightened. “And he was enlightened because he had remained a submissive religious and a humble and helpful brother^”.

Father Calmel’s impulsive character and his few shortcomings gave him many opportunities to practice humility.

During his convalescence in Toulon, the sick man was sometimes taken to an isolated hill where he could pray and read in silence and peace. One day when he was being driven back, he said: “We will give thanks for this good walk, we will sing the litanies. “He intoned so falsely that it was impossible for the sisters to respond to the invocations. They

410 - Testimony of Mr. Maurice Mucl.

411 - Testimony of Father Jehan de Belleville o.s.b.

went off in an irresistible fit of laughter. Father Calmel continued imperturbably, giving himself the answers. In the end, the young sisters apologized for this lack of politeness. He replied with a knowing look: “It’s not serious.”

His sincere humility appears in a prayer he composed on the occasion of his November 1973 retreat:

This time, the feeling of these 59 years so little fervent, of these 32 years of priesthood so little priestly, tears me apart, - Lord, in the name of your Passion, forgive me. - Take into account only you.

Do not let me end my life without having repaired everything, - It is possible if I return all the love that you pour into me. There is no other purifying repentance. “In order to live in an act of perfect love, I offer myself as a holocaust victim to your merciful love, “Dignior plagis quam osculis, non timeo quia amo (more worthy of chastisement than of embrace, I do not fear because I love you).

I have confidence in you.

- The refusal of the world

If it is through penance and humility that we advance the Kingdom of God and drive out demons, it is also through the refusal of the world. How can we claim to drive back the armies of Satan if we play his game, if we imitate those of whom he is the prince? It is not by Becizebub that one drives out the demons (Le 11), it is not with the weapons of the enemy that one can defeat him. For Father Calmel, the resistance to modernism in the Church was a crusade in the etymological sense of the word. It consisted in arming oneself with the cross, it was a work of personal conversion and an opportunity to expiate one’s own sins. This is why the Dominican called Christians to a profound reform of morals.

We already know what he thought about television and cinema, and his rigor regarding dress. To a young woman who had difficulty dressing properly, both because of the bad habits she had acquired and because of “what people will say”, he wrote:

When will she see that Christians and France will only be reborn if a certain number of girls are fierce (and accept to be seen as fools when it comes to costume)? It is true that most of those who are called educators have never bothered to meditate on the conditions of a rebirth. Think of it!

Then he let the bitterness caused by his confreres' bad excuses express itself:]

One of the sufferings in the Order with the immense majority of the fathers of my brothers, was to note (I cannot misunderstand it) the lightness, stupidity, vulgarity of their appreciations as regards purity. They are not personally bawdy (I am speaking of the whole) but on this point - as on others - they no longer have (or they never had) the reflexes of honest men and priests of the Lord. They are "Infor, més", "compréhensifs", very aware of the "last discoveries of psychology and gynecology" - Repugnant

The priest's zeal for the honor of Christians and the house of God sometimes took original forms. During one of his visits to the Dominican Sisters of the Holy Name of Jesus in Toulon, Father Calmel entered the chapel during one of the Sunday masses celebrated by the chaplain. He approached the Mother Prioress, Mother Raymond-Marie, to ask her permission to go and get a poncho from the house. He went there and soon returned with the desired garment. When he entered the chapel, he placed the garment on the lady's shoulders. The story does not say what the reaction of the lady was!

These calls to reform came from a high principle: If God allows evil, it is to obtain a greater good, according to the

expression of Saint Augustine. The present crisis is therefore a call to sanctification and leaves no room for half-heartedness and worldliness. We must therefore “not only persevere in the faith (hold on to Tradition) but, at the same time, sanctify ourselves in this resistance”, in the manner of the martyrs who were “inflexible in witnessing to the faith”, but also “full of prayer”, completely given to God*.

In a sermon on Saint Joan of Arc in Toulon”’ Father Calmel asked the question: -Can we still sanctify ourselves in the Church, even when the prelates give a bad example? “The life of Saint Joan of Arc answered in the affirmative:

She continued to serve France in spite of the king’s reluctance to do his job as king, because she forgot herself and sought the common good. She was sanctified in the Church despite the horrible scandal

of a Cauchon because she lived in Jesus, beyond the scandal given by men of the Church.

This insistent call for the reform of morals was all the more necessary because of the very nature of the present struggle. What was this fierce refusal of the new Mass that united Catholics “of Tradition” if not the active defense of the Tridentine Mass and Catholic Tradition? The defense of the Mass of all time was the defense of Christ’s sacrifice. To fight for the Mass was to claim the right to unite oneself to the Passion of Christ, to sacrifice with him, to profess our love for the blood of Jesus, and thus to strive for holiness.

Father Calmel explained this in a splendid way in an article in the December 1973 issue of Itinéraires. He recalled the doctrine of the Church concerning the efficacy of the sacraments which, even if they act ex opere operato (by the very fact that the rite is performed with the right intention), bear fruit in souls only insofar as they do not impede them, nonponentihusobkem”\ For if the Mass of St. Pius V does not run the risk of its objectivity, it will be the result of the fact that it is a sacrament of the Church,

It is not obligatory that it bears in our soul the fruits that it should bear there. The effect is not automatic. The fountain of life is flowing; the faithful are close by; but it may well happen that they do not reach out their hand, formed in a hollow, - the hollow of humility, of the right and humble intention - to gather at least a little of this living water (p. 12).

(…) Unfortunately, it is necessary to note that the strongest supporters of the conditions required for the ex opere operato, the most enlightened opponents of modernist and Protestant innovations are not always the Christians who most abhor the ponere obicem. I am not casting stones at anyone. I say, I raise my voice to shout: haec oportuit facere et ilia non omittere (Mt 23:23), one must do the one but not omit the other. The priest must keep the traditional Catholic, Latin and Gregorian Mass, he must know why, but he must also celebrate the Holy Mass with faith, love and compunction; he must prepare himself for it; he must take time for thanksgiving; he must come to pray before the tabernacle during the day, according to his possibilities (pp. 12-13). (…)

415 - “To those who do not encounter obstacles”. Ilineraira n. 178, December 1973. See R.-Th. Calmel o.p., in Si lu savais le dan de Dieu, t. II. Les sacrements, NEL, 2007, p. 117.

For the laity, the non ponere obicem takes on somewhat different forms, but the law remains the same. Now when we see the lack of benevolence, the lack of a spirit of service between certain Christians who attend the same good Mass; when we see, moreover, in what indecent dress certain Christian women allow themselves to sit at the Mass of St. Pius V and to come and kneel at the holy table; when we see them botch the thanksgiving; when one knows their terrifying strength of inertia to maintain, in spite of remarks, exhortations, worldliness, egoism, the spirit of enjoyment in their home and in their whole life, it is impossible not to wonder if these Christian women, obviously attached to venial sins by deliberate choice, have ever reflected on the meaning for them of non ponere obicem. (…) It is even more likely that they feel they have done enough, as long as they defend the good Mass. The idea that we defend the good Mass both for its own sake and in order to receive the fruits of it, the idea that there is this double motive and that, normally, the first calls for the second, does not even seem to cross their minds. Are you surprised, then, that souls of good will, not very enlightened but very deeply religious (…), are you surprised that such souls cannot understand why we defend the traditional Catholic Mass… (p. 14)

In conclusion, the priest of Jesus Christ returned to his immutable principle, to the supernatural charity, necessarily contemplative, mortified and gentle, which is the soul of all Christian life and resistance:

In the midst of the modernist revolution, let us be witnesses to the faith, as were our brothers the martyrs of the first centuries in the midst of violent persecution. Not only did

they show themselves to be strong and courageous, but also gentle and patient, and this because their souls were ardent with charity. May the love of God, a love of God that is proven by deeds and that tends to always grow, be the soul of our witness (p. 15).

- Contemplative prayer

The reform of morals and the search for holiness go hand in hand with the life of prayer, and first of all with the prayer of petition.

The more the enemies of Tradition multiplied and hardened their assaults, the more it became clear that the solution could only come from Heaven. At a

416 - “Decent dress requires banning at least: skirts behind the knee, naked arms, pants and other diabolical devices of very studied exposure of a fleeting carcass” (note by Father Calmel)

nun who had just received the habit and who was trembling at the thought of the future, he said the following:

become more and more aware that the few constituted groups that want, like your congregation, to hold the side you have taken out of pure fidelity to Jesus and the true Church, these groups have staked their lives on the miracle and must ask Jesus for it at every moment”.

While everything suggests that the Vatican is going to intensify its campaigns against Tradition, “it remains for us to stand, to pray - to go on pilgrimage to Rome to the tombs of the holy Apostles so that they may intercede with Christ for the Church and its Pope (...). A consecration of the

children to the Virgin Queen is planned for May 31. God willing ■”*. “

Father Calmel preached by example. In addition to celebrating the Divine Office, he never missed an opportunity to pray by reciting the litanies, singing such and such a hymn, reciting the rosary. And he liked to invoke some privileged protectors: Our Lady of Victories (in sickness, since she had cured the little Thérèse of Lisieux), Saint Thérèse de n antjésus^ ‘®‘Sï>”teJeanned’Arc, Saint Ivlarie-Madeleine™. saint Jean ea roix ” saint Dominiqueand other Dominicans’^‘for the golden life, saint Vincent Ferrier (for the pope), abbé Berto (especially

417 ■ Letter of November 1 ” 1969. Father Calmel wrote in this sense on August 2, 1970; “When I

pcnscàléta:préscncdcrÉglIsc*ctcommcnis’arréterd’vD€nscf>-icvo’s ‘ d

for Archbishop Lefebvre), Father Poppe^, Charles of Habsburg, Emperor of Austria^”, persons of his acquaintance who were saintly

Along with the prayer of petition, Father Calmel felt himself drawn to a more intense and profound life of prayer. ‘

At the end of his first rest period in Cotignac, he thanked Our Lady of Grace for having given him “a new inner peace of mind” and he felt more and more impelled to “contemplate the mystery of the Lord”.

Clearly, the soul of this great fighter was visited by graces of interior tic and union. “For the preaching brother,” he explained in January 1971, “the ‘preaching’ function is a continual invitation to live in the light. “Now this invitation was becoming more pressing in the midst of the struggle for fidelity. “The Lord is drawing me to more interior prayer,” he wrote, “that I may be faithful ■- “

Moreover, the Father intended that the souls who entrusted themselves to him would follow this path of union with God. This cpii meant mainly, on the side of man, a radical forgetfulness of self. For this reason, he never ceased to preach to his subjects the interior poverty “which stands before God in a state of impotence”, the stripping of oneself, the silence on oneself. They had to unite the Domine non sum dignus to the Sursum corda, to remain awake in “a humble and total confidence” and “to sing interiorly with lightness”. Also, he waged war on self-reflection and self-analysis that lead to “self-paralysis.” “Not of the psychological but of the anagpgiqut Leap out of yourself. (…) laugh at your withdrawal into yourself ‘It is easier than one thinks to hate oneself; the grace is to forget oneself’ (last sentence in the Diary of a Country Priest)” Above all, “forbid yourself to feel sorry for yourself.

424- “Yes, let us pray <

425- “Ivo

anble the abbot Poppe for mirades at the p

!” (Ictircof June 1972)

I and ‘venerable cmpewif *etc.* the secular arm to the jer*.

Clurfa, prayed for us’. For the defense of the true mass. (…) Let him

vice of a true mass. “(October 20, 1970)

””-
^^‘“iMi<^FlKl9(LovblWnie.directeurder<>diefivrii(aH)mort radredi2M”

427-Letter dated March 11, 1970.

42* - Interview of April 1970.

429 - Letter of September 12, 1973.

A great sign (if one Ét well onison). cesc the progress in the sÜcncc on oneself ” (April 19/0

431

of life and death. The gravity of the hour imposed on the faithful a very high rituality. That is why Father Calmel enjoined more than ever his own ” Desire to be entirely given over to love; all the more so because there will undoubtedly come a situation that is even more difficult and that we will only be able to face if we allow ourselves to be transformed by the Spirit of the Lord”,

The example of the clergy in the fifties was to serve as a lesson for tones ■ How were the clergy from thirty to fifty formed? To activism, without enough interior life. Vatican II on this - there is nothing left. The priests no longer have faith. Their fault is more ancient: they were not strong enough when it was necessary. With the Catholic Action spirituality of Pius XI, there is not much left

If such a doctrine of the spiritual life enchanted many souls, it could disturb some, either because of their lack of interior life, or because of old and “good” habits which seemed to contradict it. Among the latter, we must count the

unconditional supporters of the spiritual exercises given in Chabeuil.

Since his arrival in Prouilhe, Father Calmel had been in regular contact with “elders of Chabeuil” and sometimes preached recollections to them. We have Father Calmel,” they would say with pride, “we risk nothing. “Some of these good Christians, however, showed an enthusiasm and a zeal for the Chabeuil retreats which sometimes took on an overly partisan air. The Dominican felt obliged to make a clarification, in the form of a note, dated December 20, 1970, for the use of those who confided in him. In it he carefully distinguished between spiritual doctrine, which is universal, and the different spiritualities with their “methods”. He did this all the more easily because the Fathers of Chabeuil had officially chosen the new Mass and imposed it on their former retreatants.

7-Slow of October 3, 1972.

Mass in the trenches

There are in the Church, he explained, principles which are universal and which have been taught or propagated by saints chosen by God and whose message is therefore addressed to everyone.

For theology, it is St. Thomas Aquinas, who was precisely called by the popes the “Common Doctor”. “Why? Because it is an in”,gnemeni, speculative and abstract”, a universal wisdom.

In the field of Christian life, “many Church documents” recognize the character of universality of the Rosary, insofar as it is a “contemplation of the mysteries”.

In the path of the mystical life, “the great doctor of the ways of union with God - of the loss of self - of docility to the Holy Spirit, is St. John of the Cross and his daughter, the little Therese. Here again, the teaching is universal.

However, besides this general doctrine, it is the “will of God that there be religious families and therefore families of diverse spirituality (spirituality, that is to say, the concrete and practical way in which the imitanon of Jesus Christ and the surrender to the action of the Holy Spirit take place; spirituality diversifies not only with each one but also diversifies in some kinds according to the style of the founder^’). “These spiritualities are necessarily particular. “Why? Because they are concrete and individual steps. They are identical in their imitation of Jesus, but the spiritualities will be diverse in their paths, in the methods (if one is so inclined) of this imitation. “This is how we must understand the spirituality and the Exercises of St. Gnacus. This is how the spirituality and the Exercises of St. Gnacus are to be understood. “He is the initiator of a particular method of retreat, highly praised by the popes,” but it is no less particular. “No authority in the Church imposes on me the Exercises as a unique, universal method; as the equivalent in spirituality of the common doctor of theology. “

Father Calmel readily recognized, and he had the proof before his eyes, “the usefulness for some of the Ignatian method and a fruit of conversion for some,” but he was anxious to put it in its place. Above all, when it was necessary to enter into particular cases, he feared that certain preachers gave “primacy to success and efficiency”. that they were “dominated by the fear of success” and that of success in conversion

the ox^ (caime) style, because both orders of preachers were

of the world”, that one sought above all to be “effective dam l’apos (and not first of all: to announce the truth and let God do it)”. This ” *nique of spiritual success “. which was found among some petto’f certainly knows bad press in the Exercises of Saint Ignatius.* *

This fear was accentuated, in this case, by the choice of the new mass that the fathers of Chabeuil had made;

The Fathers believe so much in their method - independently of the Mass and the liturgy - that these great specialists in conversion and the spiritual life have been careful not to lift a finger to defend the true Mass. A spiritual method that is not interested in the Holy Sacrifice!

Leaving everyone free in particular matters, he advocated a return of all to universal principles;

- Intelligence and implementation of this school of contemplative prayer

- Participation in the true mass and liturgy (in Gregorian) which are an irreplaceable school of contemplation.

- To find preachers penetrated by the true doctrine, concerned above all to announce the mysteries.

- Have them read L’Imilation, Little Teresa (and St. John of the Cross - and even the few Jesuits who were inspired by St. John of the Cross, such as Lallement, Caussade and Grou).

Yes, then, to the good St. Ignatius and to his retreats, insofar as they are preached in the spirit of their founder, that is,

insofar as they serve the true life, the liturgical cult, and which establish the soul under the motion of grace. In the end, it is what is artificial, wherever it comes from, that irritated the son of Saint Dominic

We find this concern of Father Calmel two years later. In July 1972, he was invited to exercise his priestly ministry at a girls' camp in the Haute-Loire.

11 is sincerely happy to be able to help these children. One of them, then 15 years old, testifies :

442 - Already in 1963, he mena rieure unreal", the one who do: May 1963, p. 83).

He warned against the order i

cl ("The Church and the Temporal". Mnéaira n'43,

The Father assisted us spiritually. He would give us a blessing in due form, with plenty of holy water. When he sang the litanies we responded forcefully and (somewhat) with his accent. He prepared me for the meaning of the Mass "from the beginning", for taking personal responsibility for the Christian life: U urged me to start studying Greek, on the threshold of my second year, "to be able to read Saint Luke in the original language". Without expressing it well at the time, I admired this Father who was so frail - we prepared his meals for him, poor guy: a grilled steak and carrots in water - and so strong in his preaching every morning in the small chapel of the castle.

The religious was seized by the fragility of these young girls "almost uneducated", by "the unconscious impudence and the coarseness of the language and the songs", and he was convinced that "for their perseverance and for them to found a Christian home (or to enter religion) it will take a real miracle".

However, the difficulty that he retained was elsewhere. It consisted in the gap between the course of this camp and real life. Certainly, in these times of perdition, "it is a way to reach them and regroup them", but all the same, it was an "artificial thing, a kind of nomadic life, accessible only to the rich and which should not go very far into the interior life of the girls". On the contrary, he preached everywhere the true Christian life, adapted to the ages and situations, such as it has been given by God and transmitted by a long line of saints.

The rosary provides an excellent example.

Father Calmel's devotion to the Blessed Virgin has been known to us since his fifteenth year. It only grew over the years, becoming more precise and gradually finding its cheological and mystical dimension. Along with devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, the rosary seemed to him to be more and more welcome. In June 1971, he decided to publish a booklet with meditations on the mysteries of the Rosary at Dominique Martin Morin. "What would you think of the title : What would you think of the title: "The Rosary in Torment"?" he freely asked. or "In the trial of the Church, the Rosary of Mary"? or "The Rosary in the trial of the Church"? The Rosary in the trial of the Church; perhaps that's a little better.

i

The booklet was published at the end of October and 5,000 copies were printed

At the same time, Father Calmel advised a Dominican woman in gnante to present the recitation of the Rosary to her students in this way:

For your daughters and for you it is very important to say the Rosary with attention and as a psalmody. “My children, we are going to spend time with the Blessed Virgin remembering the Incarnation and the hidden life and reciting the Hail Mary. We will remember the Incarnation and the hidden life in 5 steps, or 5 mysteries. Mary will present our prayer to Jesus; she will pray for us. Then the “psalmody” begins with a word before each mystery

What was it about, in fact? To “recite the mysteries of the rosary with heart, without hurrying, so that Our Lady may keep you in the presence of Jesus

The Father was deeply convinced that “these bad days” that we have to live, are “a providential invitation to a greater love, as a call to a deeper theological life”. In this ascent to wisdom, the Rosary has an irreplaceable place.

If, in order to face the misfortunes of the times, we start to recite the rosary as it should be recited, then this prayer will bear all its fruits in our heart. It will nourish that secret fire of prayer and recollection where love grows to the point of penetrating everything and setting it on fire. As a result of the malignity of the times, we will have been led to true prayer. From this point of view again we will have redeemed the time”.

To illustrate this link between the true life and the mystical life, Father Calmel wanted to present two concrete examples to the readers of ATtinéraires.

The first is that of the Dominican saint pope, St. Pius V*'.

Great mystic, contemplative, devotee of Our Lady, defender of the truth "incapable of betraying, or at least incapable of having a certain complicity with the enemy" (p. 3), leader of the crusades, strong and prudent inquisitor, incapable of "smoothly reconciling Christian life and mediocrity" (p- %), St. Pico V is a supporter of the militant Church in all its battles up to

the end of time. His example and intercession will merit us to keep very firmly "the first thing to do, which is to look at the Lord; then to keep inseparable from this supernatural contemplation the consideration of the attacks to be repressed and the struggle to be pursued until the end. "A second example attracted Father Calmel's attention, insofar as it is closer to our time and to the condition of the simple faithful. A saint, in fact, was given to the world by God to guide Christians in these times of modernist turmoil, Saint Therese of the Child Jesus. In 1960, in On Our Roads of Exile, the Dominican had already turned to the "little" Therese, whose "heart is equal to the strange horrors of the modern world". Today, he dedicates an article of twenty-five pages in the review Itinéraires to the one who was to serve as a beacon to "the poor decadent xx'century…It is she who will give us "a concrete teaching on the perfection of love. " (p. 55)

From the letters and poems of the saint, which he quotes extensively, Father Calmel retains three great principles of the Carmelite of Lisieux;

- The whole of life is to love the Lord, to save souls for him, to refuse him no sacrifice.

- Smallness - Poverty - Abandonment’”.

- Le Ciel de Thérèse’”.

Father Calmel then carefully studies the little way of Saint Teresa, and he shows its actuality with regard to the circumstances of the present crisis, “where the Lord requires us to give witness to him” (p. 66). To those who reproach her for the apparent ineffectiveness of her resistance and her “non-complicity with modernism”, he replies;

The question is not whether we get something, because we know in advance that the Lord blesses and makes fruitful the testimony of faith of those who love him. This question does not arise, therefore

Vîtes d’exil, les Beatitudes, p. 21,

spiritual message of Saint Thçrèsc”. Itinéraires n” 169. January 1973 (see R. Th. CaJmd. esJilsdesaints.NEL,20ll,p. 125). Dmscc number, the worst Calmelproposcàs readers

e. “(Letter iv’ to Sister Françoise-Thérèse)

not. The only question is this: how can we give this testimony, which is to be given, in a holy manner? This is

where the lesson of evangelical childhood is of inestimable value, for the faithful whose faith is as simple as a child's, as soon as they have seen what the witness of faith consists of, acquiesce in perfect rectitude and great peace (p. 67).

He then quotes the great saint of Carmel and takes her to task:

"Thinking of the torments that will be shared by Christians in the time of the Antichrist, I feel my heart leap and I wish that these torments were reserved for me^". "What torments? Perhaps you were thinking, O saint whose vocation is love, of some new version adapted to the modern world of glowing grills and bonfires, suffocating mines or iron combs? Did you foresee that there would be worse? Did you think of the spiritual torments of so many faithful deceived by the hierarchy?

The author gives an indignant description of the present situation, of this "last cult invented by hell; that of the developing humanity", of "the destruction of the faith under anaesthesia", of these "bishops and priests in great numbers intoxicated, dominated by the system, leading to apostasy a multitude of defenseless simple Christians who relied on their authority". Then he adds:

God's people are deceived, abused, betrayed by their leaders. This may not be the time of the Antichrist. It is the prefiguration of it. But it is in such a terrible time that you would have liked to live to testify to the Lord your love. In the innumerable army of saints you are the only one who has manifested such a desire. You are therefore more capable than others to understand our situation and to come to our rescue. Please teach us how to become saints while the precursors of the Antichrist rule, dominate the city and enchain the Church (p. 68).

The mystic that Father Calmel was saw in full clarity the difficulty that presents itself today to souls who want to live in truth of God in these times of Apocalypse:

What intensity of love will be indispensable, what strength of soul will be required to take the path of holiness when apostasy will not have reached all the prelates, nor all the faithful, which will always be impossible, but at least a very large number of them will have been won over.

(…) In any case, in this time as in all times, it is love that will make holiness. (…) Be that as it may, in this time as in all times, it is love that will make for holiness. (…) To keep the faith when the hierarchy allows it to be disguised and lost, to remain firm in the faith in the midst of a peril of this kind is impossible without great simplicity of heart. If one is attracted by the glory that comes from men, or if one is timid and cowardly in the face of the evils they inflict, one will betray without noticing it too much, justifying oneself by the illusory wisdom of this world (p. 69).

The Dominican then turned to the “little Therese” and asked her “what she could give me”. She answered: “It is enough to love, to be small and simple. That is still and always possible. ” (p. 69)

More than other saints, little Thérèse intercedes effectively for souls who want to remain faithful in times that prefigure those of the Antichrist, because more than other saints, she has shown the very sure path to which the precursors of the Antichrist do not have access; the paths of humility, of simplicity of heart, of evangelical childhood (p. 71).

Shortly after this article was published, he was able to give it a more personal interpretation in a letter of spiritual

direction;

I hope to be able to give a glimpse of the simplicity and depth of the little way. The more you walk it, the more you feel that it is the Lord who gives you the right to walk it. We must not back away from taking the first step, then we leap forward with the agility of a deer. The doe needs silence and secrecy to leap; a simple look immobilizes it. Thus the soul given to the Lord: it runs, it flies more than it walks; but on condition that it enjoys silence and solitude

This is the source from which anyone who wants to speak to the people of our time and face the world must drink.

These weapons of light, those of penance, reform of morals and of a profound interior life are summed up in a magnificent text by Father Calmel addressed to one of his mistresses:

The love of God and progress in love.

The measure of loving God is to love him without measure.

456-Letter

457-19 Dec.

of March 18, 1973.

496

The worst Roger-Thomas Calmel

- The first step to climb is to consciously refuse nothing to God.

- The second step is to always keep lifting your foot even when you have missed the step.

- The third step is not to complain even if you think the slope is a bit steep.

- The fourth step is to be happy that others are moving faster than you and to do everything you can to keep up with them

- The fifth is to find that it is good that Jesus asks us for sacrifices.

- The sixth one is to bring us with eagerness to the small services that are in our power^”.

- The seventh to be happy if one is not noticed nor praised when one does what is necessary; to know oneself with a great pabc useless servant.

- The eighth; not to abdicate one’s dignity as a Christian (as a priest, as a nun) and yet to trample on one’s own self-esteem, to be happy that it is trampled on: to unite to humility the sense of Christian honor; this is the attitude of the martyrs in imitation of the Savior. Humility is certainly primary, but it is only true when it is indissolubly linked to a sense of honor.

- The ninth: the habit of living more and more recollected and the taste of praying in silence; this, of course, starting from liturgical prayer and the truths of faith, without which one would fall into illuminism.

- The dbdema; to share in the beatitude of the persecuted; to be happy to give witness to the faith, at the cost of our condition of existence, our reputation and our life.

- The eleventh (which stands with the tenth): to surrender oneself totally to the beloved God, therefore to consent in

advance and unconditionally to whatever the Lord may ask of us or propose to us, up to and including death.

- The twelfth: to die of love whatever the external form of this death: that of martyrs or confessors, of holy women or virgins.

One cannot help but think here of Father Vayssière. We find him again, but enriched, it seems to us, by the contribution of Saint John of the Cross and by the painful experience of the agony of the Church.

458 - “For young girls, one of the CI gncuscs ordained, “

- The testimony

Finally, here is the fifth of the weapons of light available to the Christian to defend the Church, the only one that is inherently visible, the public witness of the faith. For it is a law of love and union with God to overflow as if by superabundance in the preaching of the truth, when circumstances demand it.

The gusts of the modernist storm confirmed the Dominican in his vocation. In “these impossible times” he felt called more than ever to fulfill his “office of preacher” and to give “a greater volume of voice “**. His poor health limited his zeal, of course, but he prayed to St. Dominic to obtain for him the strength to carry out “to the end, in the thick night that is gaining ground on all sides, my luminous ministry as a Dominican priest”. He knows that his mission is very limited, like the lamp that lights a corner of the sanctuary, but that it is necessary:

I am neither a bishop nor a cardinal. I am a brother preacher who has been given the grace to preach the faith and to denounce heresy. I think that my ministry requires me to fight against a Council that favors heresy - both by its texts and by the use that has been made of them and that could not fail to be so “L

And against those who dreamed of a counter-revolution through the press and the “mass media”, Father Calmel advocated the traditional modes of preaching:

Always see that the “mass media” are not equal for good and for evil. Even if they are controlled, which is far from being. Moreover they cannot reach the bottom of the man, nor express it, and even more in this period of absence of authority.

To reverse the current of public opinion through the mass media? No, it is necessary a firm, sure, holy authority (it is not there) and even with that, it is not a newspaper, neither the radio nor the TV. that will convert the world

To warn not only against modern errors, but also against their maneuvers, Father Calmel encouraged reading

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Bernard Fay’**, Augustin Coch’ Vaquié, Canon Cacta He himself had to distance himself from his former teachers. Father CalmeL, who had admired and discovered St. Thomas through him, now openly criticized his “ramblings”. He also warned against Cardinal Joun, “who, although he was a great theologian, came to teach grave errors about the infused

knowledge of Christ, abandoned the Mass and attacked Archbishop Lefebvre

Moreover, he knew how to adapt to his audience and address simple subjects.

He advised the Dominican teachers to return to the magisterium of the Church of all times. In this way they should show their faith in the primacy of the Pope, but without believing him to be impeccable; “This is the other feat of faith in his infallibility. To make see the importance of the Tradition, the catechism of the Council of Ttente, that cannot change*’, “

He insisted on the need to read Sacred Scripture in the light of dogma, and thus of traditional theology. To this end, he suggested to Jean Madiran, at the time of the publication of the texts of the New Testament that he had undertaken, to attach to them a small explanation accompanied by a summary of the commentary of Saint Thomas Aquinas. He explained:

Why would I want this method? To popularize in the reader the fact that dogmas (or catechism answers) originate in Scripture; to give the habit of reading Scripture with the dogmatic definitions (and Scripture answers) in mind. For without this the rendering of the catechism and Scripture will remain insufficient and less likely to be heard by the devout readers of Scripture - and such readers do exist^”.

Moreover, since one of the tricks of sophistry and tevolurion consisted in changing the definition of words and posing the problems of tnvers, the counter-revolution had to start by returning to the real definition

U ; Bernard Fay : de JueUs > Without equivalent for me;

466 - Letter of December 8, 1972, in 467. Interview of April 15, 1970. 468 ‘ Note of December 15, 1971.

Note of February 1973.

of things Thus, in Lyon as in the Carmel of Draguignan, he explained the texts of the canon of the Mass’*™.

Father Calmel’s preaching was a call to reflection. For in these times of crisis of faith and authority, it was necessary to give souls solid intellectual nourishment. They certainly had to guard the deposit revealed and transmitted by the magisterium and by the holy Church, but they also had to penetrate into the texts and into the rites, they had to develop the intelligence of the faith.

He explains in a letter that we reproduce in the telegraphic style that he liked:

Desire to remain both faithful and firm in Tradition… and smart! Not always achieved - Don’t get worked up about it. See the importance of what is “in line” - This is first. Sometimes application a bit “crock”, but it is better to maintain because “in line”.

For example: Jacques Maritain did not want to repeat what his predecessors had said, as they had said it. He comes to profess an absurdity: Jesus would have had only a progressive consciousness of his divinity.

Another example: some of the fathers were taught by St. Thomas in an orthodox way. But not “intelligent”. So, they

wanted to be more “intelligent” and left the door open to all heresies!

The ideal is to be an “intelligent traditionalist”, but to see that it is always the guarantee of the truth that must take precedence over originality’*’.

They pass in this address, united to a strong faith and a ■ luminous. A very large audience had come from Sauve “e^K Lémance and neighboring villages to unite in the family’s mourning. Calmel did not hesitate to invite all the baptized to make a renewed profession of faith and to remain faithful to the only true sacrifice of the Mass:

In the presence of this coffin and during the mass offered for the repose of the soul of this beloved deceased, how can we not make our own the statement, the profession of faith of Martha; Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of the living God who came into this world |I believe that you are the Son of God in all truth, consubstantial with the Father.

I believe that you were truly born of the Virgin and died for our salvation; I believe that the Mass is a true sacrifice in which you continue to offer yourself, as on the Cross, for the living and for the dead, through the ministry of priests. Utique Domine ego credidt.

We make this profession of faith at this funeral mass all the more firmly because the man whose body lies in the coffin was a man of honor, a loyal and just man, but above all a man of faith. His strength of character throughout his life, his kindness, his generosity, his patience in the painful

condition to which his infirmity had reduced him, all these virtues he owed, even more than to his good nature and education, to the greatness and simplicity of his Catholic faith.

The best testimony of affection that you can give to the dear departed, as well as the sweetest consolation that you can give to the family, and to me myself who is celebrating this mass, is first of all to

Those present had not heard such language for a long time, yet it was so well adapted to their simple and realistic souls. This is the language that could have saved the Church in France even in 1971, if the clergy had so desired. On the contrary, preaching done out of love for God and souls serves as food for union with God. This fifth weapon of the Christian soldier, the open preaching of the truth, was meant to enrich his love of the cross, his humility and his life of prayer. He expressed it in a formula that sums up his Dominican vocation:

I have many works in progress. May I give light and disappear into the light■”L

that among the denied realities of the modernists, the theology of the Church held a place

ntrale. After having defended the mass of always, it is therefore the holy Spouse He the fu n!’ of his enemies,

the following “l-Itineraries”^ which were published by

patticulieHr rnodifications and additions planned by the author (in

Apart from the fourth chapter: “Authority and Holiness in the Church”,) -<

Fontiom’bauhTpèrrj,’°7 ^ Benedictine of

conferences at ml’ ^1’

this stand mlnr ‘ Éghæ >>. Since then, he had not stopped studying

an work c preach. Now the time had come to make it

intention i ‘1” ■’ Project to title Pro Ecclesia. 11 expresses its

a shopkeeper, as well as her way of working:

paqul”d^™n^f

nier chapter - neck Patience (…) I copy the fifth and der _ ^ like the others. The important thing is that they fit

by their mass: in this case we don’t need long analytical developments; stat sua mole -, it holds by its mass. *

I hope that it will give the impression that the Church is an impregnable city and has nothing to do with the vapid and deadly conceptions that Vatican II has made fashionable^’^.

Soon, it is under the title of Pro civitateDei that he intends to publish these studies" Finally, it will become a Brief Apology for the Church of all time.

The first three chapters are devoted to a doctrinal study of the mystery of the Church. Against the innovators who distinguish in the Church a mystical, secret, elusive reality, and the "phenomenon", its historical and evolutionary realization, its contingent appearances, the author reminds us that the visible elements of the Church (its hierarchy, its rites, its dogmatic definitions) "the invisible elements (truth, holiness), are united like body and soul,

In the light of this principle, Father Calmel addresses the question of the exercise of authority, and thus of obedience in times of crisis, and then the much more difficult question of the union of priests and faithful when authority is lacking. On this occasion, he offers reflections that constitute one of the most beautiful pages of his entire written work. Against those who dream of an "immense and worldwide league or association of priests and faithful Christians", which would only lead to a kind of party in the Church, "foreign to real, established and recognized groups", the Dominican returns to his eher principle: "Let each one go to the end of his grace";

Let each priest, each laie, each small group of laies and priests, having authority and power over a small fort of Church and Christianity, go to the end of his possibilities and power. That the fortress leaders and the occupants do not ignore each other and communicate with each other. Let each of these strongholds, protected, defended, trained, directed in prayer and song by a real authority, become as much as possible a bastion of holiness: this will assure the certain continuity of the true Church and will effectively prepare the renewals for the day that pleases the Lord.

What happens next will show the relevance of these reflections.

The Brief Apology for the Church of all time continues with a defense of the monarchical regime of the Church (ch. 5), which is certainly the regime best adapted to the nature and the end of the mystical body of Christ. In passing.

Father Calmel rightly points out that a good number of modernists have lost their faith because of their poor political formation; “Politics has turned their theology upside down. “They simply wanted to apply the concepts of modern democracy to the Church.

There remains, of course, the delicate question that the Father will deepen later on according to the circumstances, that of the authority of the pope. This one seems, in fact, to follow in the footsteps of the false prophets of our time. This is the place, for the theologian, to recall the principles of Christian obedience, which does not exempt one from “opening one’s eyes” and resisting orders contrary to those of Christ. For, “the Church is not the mystical body of the Pope; the Church with the Pope is the mystical body of Christ. (…) We live by and for Jesus Christ” and not “by and for the pope”. It is therefore out of “fidelity to the light”, whatever the circumstances, that the Christian must sometimes turn a deaf ear to the Pope’s orders.

23

The great dilemmas

“Tradition with intelligence and fervor”. this beautiful program,

V, which summarizes so well the thought of Father Calmel, posed increasing difficulties to Christians until they seemed insurmountable to many.

Some were stumbling over the question of the validity of the new rites of the saaements. Others, more numerous, were paralyzed by the prospect of having to disobey the pope. For all of them there was the anxious question of the future.

The new rites of the sacraments

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Father Roger-Thomas Calmel

This series of articles opens with a reflection on the power of the men of the Church over the rites of the sacraments

There is no point in hiding from it. Masses become dubious or invalid according to the rhythm of a relentless progression. And how to stop it? Strictly adhering to the reforms? But what could be the rigorous and strict conformity to reforms that have established fluctuation, variations, pastoral adaptations without term or measure? One wonders. The reforms are so made that one can no longer know when one is passing their measure, (p. 2)

These novelties are regulated above all by the measure of openness to the world, not by the measure of the faith tradition. Therefore, it is logically impossible to keep a measure; I mean a Christian measure. (…) One does not enter the revolution with measure. Nor does one enter with measure into the present system of reforms.

One refuses it or one lets oneself be dragged along. In any case, if one enters into it, one no longer has a universal

objective criterion by virtue of which one can justify to others the position one feels one must hold, (p. 3)

This is why so many priests, who have received a good formation, who would like to keep a measure in the innovations, find themselves reduced to impotence. Unworthy Masses, dubious Masses, invalid Masses are multiplying and will continue to multiply; they complain about it, but in vain, because they have deprived themselves of the indispensable means to oppose an irreducible resistance; these means that they have let escape are none other than the data of a liturgical tradition that is more than a thousand years old and always homogeneous and coherent (p. 4). Doesn’t the Church have a certain amount of power over the rite of the sacraments? Certainly, but salua illorum substantia says the Council of Trent, being saved their substance, And customs cannot be changed (que grauibus et justis tamis, for serious and just reasons. Now the reasons given for the reform of the Mass (not to displease the Protestants) and those for the reform of the matter of confirmation (allowing any other “oil” than olive oil because of the difficulties of moving, in the xx’century!

On one thing only we are certain, and that is that since sunflower oil is obviously not olive oil, and since any oil other than olive oil has been forbidden for almost two thousand years, it is the case that the decree of Bishop Annibale Bugnini has set aside a constant tradition and, alleging the difficulty of transport, has set aside this tradition on false grounds. How can one not be in the greatest uncertainty about his new confirmation? (p. 6-7)

For if the men of the Church have a certain power over the rites of the sacraments, it is on the condition that they remain in the role that Providence has entrusted to them: it would be necessary for the said Congregation to show us that it is acting as a steward, a simple steward who honestly gives her reasons, who maintains her rank as a steward, and therefore who respects the unanimous tradition, since this tradition is that of stewardship, of lieutenancy, and not of full power, nor of arbitrary power. (…)

When Churchmen in the regulation of the sacraments allow themselves radical, essentially casual and arbitrary innovations which evidently do not serve to guarantee or solemnize the rite, as tradition has always done, - when Churchmen act in this way, we have no reason to believe that they are safeguarding the substance of the sacraments and exercising Church power; we do not follow them. (p. 8)

Father Calmel extends his study in the next issue of the magazine. He attacks the typically revolutionary methods that governed the liturgical reforms that came out of Vatican II. Who, then, directed the operations ï “The modernist mafia of parallel occult authorities that manipulate the official authorities; unless, in certain cases, the official authority holder is himself one of the pawns of the parallel occult authority. “(p. 113) The practical attitude of the faithful is therefore clear: “It is Christian prudence that demands it and faith in the Church, especially faith in the assistance of the Holy Spirit with regard to the Church, for the Spirit of truth cannot inspire what is anonymous, arbitrary, and shifting. ” (p. 114)

In the same issue, he responds to a statement presented by the Documentation catholique of August 6-20, 1972 as a “very simple principle”: “What the pope has done, the pope can undo. “

480-“Lts modifications clans in la discipline sac™ncntairc”.///”^/rwn”168,dcccmbrc 1972, pp. 110 and SV. See R.-Th. QûmcXo.Ÿ.sSitusavaisUdondeDieu, t.ii. Les sacrements, NEL, 2011. p. 31.

The first answer is that of common sense: if this “principle” were simple, how can we explain then “that in twenty centuries of popes and twenty centuries of Church. no pontiff has done, to upset the Mass c ” * dared to do the pope of now? ” (p. 126) ‘

More profoundly, it is necessary to know what type of transformation has been carried out: “Whether it is a question of dogma and morals or of discipline, when the change is of the modernist type, this principle is never true: changes of this type are revolutionary and entirely directed at destroying the Church. ” (p. 127)

Father Calmel takes the opportunity to recall the four characteristics of modernist changes: the role of parallel, anonymous and occult authorities, which is “essentially the system of modern democrats” - the false pretexts (participation, convenience) put forward to destroy the faith - not the negation but the reinterpretation of dogmas - the sowing of doubt by the multitude of forms, variants and exceptions.

Such changes “do not belong to the power of the pope, of any pope”. Such maneuvers are not those of the Church of Christ and tend to destroy it.

And when a pope commits abuses of power in the religious order, every Christian also knows that he must overcome

this scandal; the way is to hold on to Tradition by redoubling prayer and fervor (p. 128).

In January 1973, the Dominican theologian refuted a text of the Irish bishops who, “in order to pass on the changes after Vatican II - these universal changes oriented towards a new religion”, affirmed: “Without changes, there would be no growth. “(La Croix, October 12, 1972) 11 then invited the prelates to ask themselves whether these changes could not be “decrease or excrescence”? Is it enough to change to become better? And he concludes:

When, under the pretext of broadening and adapting, the pastors of today claim to lead the flock into pastures that are deadly, our duty is not to follow them, if we want to follow the good Shepherd and, with him, the all too rare pastors who remain faithful to him. Beware of bad shepherds (p. 197).

U finally addresses the delicate question of the validity of modernist baptisms, because of the intention of the minister To those who would underestimate the importance of the intention, under the pretext that the minister of a sacrament is only an insider. But since we are dealing with a human being, a free being, this instrumentality is only possible in virtue of a minimum of voluntary acceptance; at least that the minister manifests, by his observance of the rite, the intention to do what the Church does, and therefore does not give the impression that his intention is not to do what the Church does (p. 4),

In more than one case, it is clear that the priest no longer wants to do what the Church does.

While he was composing this series of articles, a particularly painful event was to arouse Father Calmel's indignation.

A good friend of the Dominican, Father Becker had died and was buried on December 29, 1972. Father Calmel had met this good old priest during his many trips to Lorraine. Against the most formal intentions of the deceased, the priests of the diocese, under the benevolent gaze of the bishop of Metz, inflicted on him a scandalous burial Mass (communion in the hand, spilling, at the end of communion, the consecrated hosts into the collection trays, etc.):

The experience of St. Rufme seems conclusive. For those Catholics who want to keep the true faith for themselves and their children, to treat the true Mass as it should be treated, and to approach the sacraments as Catholics should approach them, there is only one way to go: not to go to any other Mass than the traditional Catholic Latin and Gregorian Mass, according to the Roman Missal of St. Pius V; to receive the sacraments only according to the ritual of Pius XJI. fp. 245)

On those Sundays when, despite our best efforts, this mass is not available to us

The honor of God and the salvation of souls are at stake. In a note from

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The Christian of whom I speak does not deprive himself of mass more or less often; he dares to see, without any

illusion, that he is deprived of it more or less often. 11 makes up for it as much as he can. There is no easy solution**.

(p. 246, note 1)

In the editorial of the same issue, Father Calmel deepens the question of the minister's intention and therefore of the validity of the new sacraments. This follows the public letter of Jean Madiran to Archbishop Marty of Paris on the 1973 missal, which he claimed was heretical and in which he demanded, in the name of the faith, either the public retraction or the dismissal of the cardinal

Father Calmel had considered the celebration of the sacraments from the point of view of the minister's intention. Here he considers it from the point of view of the reformers themselves. It is not for the Church to institute sacraments. And if it is up to the Church to specify and develop the rites, "there is no Church either which would arrogate to itself an autonomous, independent, non-subordinate, arbitrary and despotic power with regard to sacramental realities. "(p. 12) Therefore, the Church's interventions in the sacramental order can only be "in favor of the sacrament, that is, in order to honor the sacrament, to bring it to light, to prepare the faithful for it" (p. 14). Consequently;

If the exercise of this power was for worldly purposes, it could not be attributed to the Church or the Holy Spirit. The Church acts as a holy, submissive wife, as an enlightened steward from above. If she were to act as an emancipated wife who had got hold of her husband's patrimony in order to dissipate it according to her whims and liaisons, she would cease to be, whatever the appearances, the holy Church. One cannot recognize the bride of Christ in criminal extravagances, (p. 15)

Les sacrements, NEL, 2011, p. 125), he encouraged fathers to make this heavy sacrifice;

read the prayer, the epistle and the gospel; take communion of desire; recite a rosary together, but do not hesitate to abstain from new masses. God will make up for it. “(p. 2) s< In any case, it is vital that children grow up with the persuasion that our age is one of disguised and perbde persecution and that, in the midst of this persecution, their parents remain fervent Catholics. “(p. 4)

The intention of the reformers since the Second Vatican Council is clear. They have expressed it in a multitude of statements and it appears in the decrees themselves. The one on the promulgation of the new rite of confirmation, alleging the reason of the acute difficulty of transporting olive oil, is symptomatic. “We are lied to and mocked. (...) But the Church does not make fun of her children, the Church does not lie; the Holy Spirit does not teach her to lie. “(p. 16-17) And if “we are deceived about the real reason for the change, it is because this reason is not avowable. If it is unconfessable, it is because it does not proceed from the Catholic faith. We are justified in concluding that the change comes from heresy, i.e., from a Protestant conception of the sacraments, and that it goes towards heresy, i.e., towards a Protestantization of the Catholic Church. ” (p. 17)

The question of the intention of the Reformers indirectly affects the intention of the minister. He may be more or less unaware of Christ’s intention, but it is understood that he implicitly intends to do what Christ wants when he wants what the Church wants. Now this latter intention is

expressed by the traditional rite. The priest using a traditional rite, no matter how weak his theology, is doing what the Church wants, which is sufficient for validity. Father Calmel takes the example of Talleyrand and his consecration of bishops (p. 18). In the case of new rites, the question becomes much more delicate, insofar as they no longer express explicitly what Christ wants. The priest can very well use them with an intention quite different from that of Christ and of the Church of all times. We have seen this in Taizé and in many other places. It is then really the question of validity that arises.

In order to understand this question of the validity of the sacraments and the intention of the minister, it is necessary to remember that it is Christ who holds the sacraments in his hand; he, the High Priest, is the principal minister; these sacred signs he himself willed and instituted and he does them through his Church. His Church, the faithful dispenser, is always in accord with his intention; he surely acts through her, through the rite which she has fixed in accordance with the divine institution. But when churchmen come to have another idea, another intention about the sacraments than that of Christ, for example, the intention to please heretics, they risk not only manipulating the rites but distorting them in such a way that Christ's intention as it relates to the very substance of the sacrament is denied and rejected.

As a result, the rite which contained and expressed in its substance the divine institution soon finds itself so changed in meaning and nature that the sacrament no longer exists (p. 22).

The practical conclusion is obvious: “To be sure that the sacraments we can give or receive are in reality those of the Church, that is to say, those of Christ through his Church, we will remain with the provisions prior to the last Council. ” (p. 26)

Father Calmel concludes this long series of studies on the new sacraments in the April 1973 issue.

U presents an extreme case. Suppose a parish priest announces that the celebration will be replaced by a picnic. But if, at the end of a picnic on the grass, he says, “We will end the celebration of the Eucharist” and pronounces the divine words over bread and wine, will the “Mass” be valid? (p. 14) It is not impossible, if he has the right intention. “Let us admit it in the strict sense; let us admit it on condition that he has not expressly shown that he pronounces the divine words with an intention different from that of the Church. “If he does not use any missal, we shall have only his good words to assure us of this. “However, if the parish priest in question had used a missal made with the collaboration of heretics, used by heretics who do not believe in the Mass, in short, if the parish priest had used a multi-purpose missal, would he be as certain that his intention would not have been inflected? “(p. 14) The whole question of the new rites is there. They are ambivalent, they do not express in an explicit way the intention of Christ and the Church. The proof of this is that heretics use them in all peace of conscience. To be sure of the celebrant’s right intention, the faithful can no longer rely on the rite. Whereas, before the new Ordo, “the priest necessarily entered into an intention which was expressed with all desirable clarity, without the slightest ambiguity. “(p. 15) The proof of this is that the heretics fiercely rejected the Roman missal of St. Pius V.

If someone thinks he can rely on the Summa Theologica of St. Thomas Aquinas to contradict him, Father Calmel will remind him of the wise and prudent way to understand and use the writings of the angelic doctor. Theoretical knowledge of St. Thomas does not dispense from an objective analysis of the present crisis and the revolutionary maneuvers of the modernists:

We find what we need in Saint Thomas to respond to modern errors; still, it is necessary to have grasped what makes the typically modern character of these famous errors, when we try to situate them under the heading of “modern errors”.

To the Summa Theologica”, /““érairea n” 172, April 1973. p. 14.

the light of the Angelic Doctor. - This is how Thomistic principles on authority explain the essential iniquity of any society of a revolutionary type; still, in order to understand this, it is necessary to realize that societies of this type are characterized by the setting up of parallel authorities, more or less occult. In the same way, in the matter of the sacraments, Thomistic principles on the intention of the Church make it possible to resolve, at all times, questions of invalidity; still it is necessary to have considered, for our time, the modernist novelty of an uncertain expression (even if it claims to be official) of this intention of the Church (p. 16).

In other words, St. Thomas will provide the major of the reasoning (here; the universal proposition that holds at the level of principles), but he does not exempt us from finding

and expressing the minor (here: the particular proposition that holds at the level of cireonstances).

In passing, the Father characterizes very well the style of the liturgical reforms as well as the teaching of the men of the Church since the Council:

One of these procedures consists, of course, in the use of evasive expressions and intentional silences in the documents that are said to be covered by the supreme authority; without, however, daring to say that they are irreformable or guaranteed by infallibility (p. 16).

The new magisterium is indeed “evasive”, it does everything to flee and to silence the truth of all time. It strives to avoid it, to avoid meeting it. There is something dishonest and false in this process, like a child with a guilty conscience.

The obedience of faith

Father Calmel’s studies on the new sacraments and on the revolution in the Church, as admirable as they were, came up against a major obstacle, that of obedience. Perhaps we will tolerate that a theologian as brilliant and as spiritual as Father Calmel allows himself to be critical of the new things, we will even excuse his deviations in language, but whatever he says, he will have to bow to reality: Aobm locuta, causa finita est (Rome has spoken, the cause has been heard). The liturgical and disciplinary reforms that he stigmatized came from Rome; they were no longer a matter of free choice.

The Dominican had already expressed himself on this delicate subject. However, a crowd of priests and faithful expected from him a theological word, a sure judgment on the subject of obedience. So he set out to satisfy their desire. On this point he had few illusions. Among the

modernists, very few priests or bishops were scrupulous in their obedience to the pope.

Each one did as he pleased and obeyed the directives of Rome only insofar as they served his revolutionary views.

Shall I write the article on the Pope? I have the impression that, except for a few people from the other world (such as Fathers Behler or Rzewuski) or a few nuns, no one believes that obedience to the Pope is any longer a question of the current nonsense about the Mass and about everything. I will see that U understood that what separated him from the devastating current was not primarily moral but rather doctrinal. It was about the very nature of things, of Revelation, of faith and of the Church.

Moreover, because of his theological and Dominican formation, Father Calmcl was immune to a voluntaristic notion of obedience. He entrusted to a director: Some have asked whether my Declaration is still compatible with faith in the Pope, the respect due to the Pope. For my part, I did not have even for a second an atom of bad conscience.

I believe in the pope. I bless the Lord for having made a Church with a pope, a hierarchical Church. But I have never thought that the Pope was impeccable, nor that, if the Pope suggests a sin, it is disrespectful to reject his suggestion. I admit the necessity of legal steps to put an end to the present state of affairs; but there is no need to wait for the result of these steps to declare my refusal, because the celebration of a non-equivocal Mass cannot wait. With the certainty that Christ loved his Church too much to let her perish for lack of a Eucharist, I am certain that he loves her

too much to let her perish for lack of an infallible pope, a pope who does not teach error. And if he allows even an infallible pope to indulge in extraordinary weaknesses, we hold on to his infallibility and do not accept his weaknesses'".

However, a good number of the faithful were truly torn between their ardent desire to keep the faith they had always had and their love of the pope and obedience. So the theologian set to work, asking for light and strength from his usual benefactors in Heaven;

Finally I wrote: Greatness and weakness of Peter's successor. (...)

I ask Father Berto for light to see clearly if I should publish: I think so'".

Finally, his study will be published under the title/.d certitude dans l'Église Was not his categorical and unquestioning refusal of the new Mass a revolt against authority? Was it reconcilable with the submission he owed to the Church and to his Order? Where did he find the security of remaining with Christ when he was apparently cutting himself off from the Church? Precisely the peace of his conscience came from the fact that he was not at all cut off from the Church!

U explains this by distinguishing between a supreme security and an ordinary security of being with the Church of Christ. The first is based on the infallibility of the Pope in his ex cathedra definitions and those of the ecumenical councils, and those of the ordinary magisterium, that is, of

the teaching in “continuity and coherence (…) with the solemn acts and above all with the teaching always; quod uhique, quod semper.) with the solemn acts and above all with the teaching of all time; quod uhique, quod semper, quod ab omnibus and in short, qiiod ab ecclesia Romana (what has been believed everywhere, always and by all, and by the Roman Church)” (p. 37).

No one has ever claimed that the pope can never sin, even if only “by silence, by omission, by equivocation. The “ordinary security”, that which is based on the personal qualities of the pope, on his gifts “of nature and grace”, is then lacking (p. 37). What, then, is to be done when the Pope deprives the Church of this “ordinary security”, so sweet and “extremely precious”? To pray for the Pope, certainly:

Then, to make the most of the supreme security of which I spoke above, to be attached in particular to Tradition (…). To judge doubtful acts and decrees and, insofar as they lead to the alteration of dogma and worship, to oppose them with firmness; with respect, no doubt, because it is a question of the Pope; with firmness just as much, because it is a question of not becoming an accomplice in a sin against the true confession of dogma and the true celebration of worship (p. 38). (…)

In the name of the solemn infallible definitions as well as of the ordinary teaching in continuity and coherence with Tradition, (…) to refuse the fallible and reformable acts which, obviously, destroy this same Tradition (p. 38).

in the Church”. Itineraries n” 145. July-August 1 nts.NEL.2011.p.67.

Father Roger-Thomas Calmel

Is there not, in the unconditional obedience advocated by certain conservative priests, a certain cult of the person, “a kind of idolatry of the private person of the pope”? (p. 20) One speaks of “the sublimity of the office”, of the authority that the pope has received from Christ. “But finally, this authority, this function are not hypostasized” (p. 39). They are not a reality in themselves. a kind of angel or divinity, in the manner of Plato’s Ideas, “they are conferred on a person who is such and such”. The pope remains a man, in himself and in the exercise of his authority, with his possible weaknesses or his always possible cowardice Father Calmel then widens the problem to its true dimension. For in the dilemma that confronts Catholics today, it is not the Pope alone who is at issue. We are faced with “revolutionary processes and methods which have penetrated the Church” and which incite the Pope to take measures which are “a danger to faith and worship. He who believes that the Pope is impeccable will be hiding his face and will too easily dispense with the intellectual defense that would effectively preserve him from putting his finger in the gears of universal liturgical subversion” (p. 41).

It may be objected that such caution resembles the Protestant free examination. He answers proudly;

Like every Christian, I firmly believe that we must read the texts of the Gospel concerning the powers of the pope by referring not only to Scripture but also to Tradition, in particular to the solemn definition of Vatican I. (…) (hear him) the Thou art Petrus according to the doctrine of faith. For the doctrine of faith, which is sure, understands papal primacy not in the sense of pure arbitrariness and in such a way that Christians are reduced to the unworthy rank of unconditional subjects of the Pope, but in the sense of

conformity to Tradition. By this very fact, the obedience of the Christian is contained within defined limits. The authority which pretends to be free of these limits or which pretends to be free of them, obliges its subjects to no longer obey it, (p. 41-42)

Consequently, it is false to say that “in obeying, one is never wrong” (p. 43). The very nature of the Church is at stake;

Let us laugh when she commands; as if clic éuic exempted from being able to command the sin^ - the true obedience esc that of Joan of Arc: God first served. (Letter of December 20, 1970)

The Church is the hierarchical society of Christian heroism, not of convenient conformism, and, moreover, one can sin, alas! even in obedience. We know this since the solemn declaration of Peter and the Apostles: It is better to obey God than men {Ac v, 29)

The Church is not a gigantic religious administration where only conformity is demanded without looking further; it is the Mystical Body of Christ, his holy Spouse, a society on the level of the theological life and the honor of the saints, a hierarchical society of grace where we are prescribed the heroism of charity, in true obedience, very different from conformism of any kind. It is the sense and experience of the transcendence of the mystery of the Church that allows obedient souls to oppose a respectful but firm refusal to the decrees of the hierarchy when, obviously, they clash with the most certain Tradition (p. 43).

The providential character of Father Calmel's previous studies on the mystery of the Church appears here in full light. It was a question for him, at present, of applying to the present painful circumstances the great principles which he had meditated and taught at length in the past.

The article ends with a magnificent prayer to the holy priests of past times. The war of a completely new type that was raging in the Church and in the world, the third world war, the subversive war, brought back to the Dominican's memory the heroic priests who had built up his childhood, then those who had suffered the terrible consequences of the condemnation of the Action Française and, more recently, those who had known how to overcome the temptation of the worldly apostolate after 1945. He felt himself to be their heir and addressed them in a fiery prayer:

In the living death into which we are being thrown, our Mother Mary and our brothers in Heaven will preserve us from spiritual death and will enable us to face it. We remember those who have gone before us marked by the sign of faith and priestly character. Humble parish priests of the beautiful French countryside at the beginning of the century under the icy gust of the persecutions of masonry, magnificent soldier-priests, inflexible chaplains on the hallucinating battlefields, little vicars of

Bcauchcsnc, rue de Rennes. Paris). The more one knows the history of these priests who gave their lives during the First World War, the more one is convinced that the Church of France knew then one of the most beautiful efflorescences (the most beautiful perhaps) of priestly sanctity. When one reads in the life of Abbot Maugendre (p. 191) the account of the communion in the nanches during the winter of

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I am a man of the suburbs, abbots of the patronage, preachers of my Order, indifferent to the specialization of the audiences, who tirelessly announced the eternal Gospel to the whole of the faithful people, - a huge crowd of our elders who passed before us as living models of priestly sanctity, heroic brothers who show us the way, clear and strong souls who have always believed in your dignity as priests and have kept yourselves free from all contamination by the sophistries of Catholic action, certainly your crobt was not light and your fervor was commensurate with your cross; but at least you had the ordinary comfort that the lucidity and vigor of the pontiff of Rome poured into you. (…) Priests, our elders, you who are filled for eternity with the vision of the face and infinite beatitude, remembering the ordinary security which you shared in the Church militant yesterday, obtain for us that we should not worry, now that this kind of security is lacking. Over and above the flexing of the Pope’s government, teach us to establish ourselves in the firmness of Tradition, which it is impossible for him to reject positively by a formal act of his magisterium (pp. 44-46).

A few months after the publication of this article, Father Calmel returned to the subject of obedience, this time focusing on the authority of the Second Vatican Council. To a correspondent, he confessed that he had been very influenced by the recent conference of Archbishop Lefebvre in Toulon;

Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre’s conference only confirmed me in this way. To fight against Council 21’ - because one recognizes the authority - because one lives by the doctrine of the previous twenty; yes, to fight in this way. Fight the new way of governing of the Pope (who in fact abdicates into

the hands of the national Churches instead of exercising the personal power of the keys) because one recognizes the proper and unique authority of the Pope and wants to remain in the tradition of the Popes. (…) In any case, I entrust myself very particularly to Our Lady for this work; it must be pursued without fury, without bad feelings (but with Christian anger), but also without wavering because one would be falsely pitied by those who do not see. Sedes sapientiœ, ora pro nobis*”.

At the distribution of communion, one is frightened by the decline of the clergy in the space of half a century. (Note from Father Calmel)

In the course of his prayers and reflections, the chronicler of ‘Itinéraires grasped more and more the angle from which he should approach things:

For the “Council”, I think I can discern the humble work that I can do: to show that this Council is irreducible to the others and that it is necessary to understand this so that we are not the plaything of its tricks*.

My article on the Council will become; Lpt/aufe of the Church, will explain the loyalty of the Church of all times, will recommend to fiiir the equivocations aggravated by the Council; but I will not speak mainly about this Council, it would be too long and it is only toxic porridge for the cats In the end, the decisive question is the following; yes or no, “must we agree that Vatican II contradicts the twenty councils that preceded it? “(p. 8) In fact, the last council differs essentially from the other councils of history, “it is foreign to our history” and must be treated in a particular

way. The theologian then resolves the question of the Council’s authority in a simple way: “As a friend of mine sometimes says, ‘As a council with the authority peculiar to councils, the second Vatican Council did not take place. “

To arrive at this conclusion, Father Calmel does not consider here so much the content of the texts of the Council, but rather its progress and the mode of government that it inaugurated in the Church. We see here to what extent he was helped in his judgment by the work of Augustine Cochin;

From Vatican II onwards, by means of this Council and by the Pope’s obstinacy in imposing it on us, a revolutionary legislation has penetrated the Church. Much more stifling than the classic abuse of power, such legislation is so conceived and applied that it destroys what it claims to organize or defend (p. 10).

The example of communion in the hand and that of the new Mass speak for themselves:

The present Pope will have gratified the Church (if one can say so) with a Mass of drawers. This is what is called destroying the Mass in the very decree that claims to organize it; demolishing at the very moment when one claims to be building. Here is a good example of revolutionary legislation (p. 11).

Should we not distinguish the teachings of the Council, the official decrees, from their more or less wild application and regrettable abuses?

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Father Calmel goes back to the principle of causality: “You will judge the tree by its fruits. The innovations sanctioned by authority lead, by their very nature, to these extravagances:

But what, since we are obliged to give ourselves up to this obvious fact: the official innovations launched by the official legislator lead by themselves to sacrilege, will we not have the simplicity to apply in this case, implausible but real, the indisputable principle which was taught to us: never to cooperate in sacrilege in a formal way, knowing it and wanting it? These innovations, which no one thought of ten years ago, do not undoubtedly force us to commit sacrilege, but they do lead us to it by virtue of their orientation. What more is needed to refuse them? Are we going to twist our conscience in the dark meanders of a cautious casuistry? Are we going to repress the first surge of our priestly heart? Will we stifle, whether to please the pope of a day, the indignant cry of our priestly honor and the reverential fear of the etemal judgments of God? But such orders, that is, intrinsically revolutionary, whoever the author may be, oblige us to do only one thing: to ignore them (p. 11-12).

All the same, does this not depend on a certain counter-revolutionary vision? Is Father Calmel not too dependent on his reading of the works of Augustin Cochin? The theologian responds to this objection with an appeal to common sense: “It is enough to look to see,” (p. 13) It is indeed the mode of gomnement of modernist Rome which is fundamentally distorted and which therefore cannot oblige in conscience: “A polymoqjhc or multifonous or multidimensional law, use whatever word you like, is not a law which obliges. ” (p. 15)

The religious intends to keep a sincere submission to the pope, but he cannot follow him when he separates himself from the mode of management of a successor of Peter. To

follow the directives of the pope today would be “not toc what has been done for fifteen centuries v,. This does not call into question the authority of the pope, because “in those of his acts which allow a rewlurionarylation to take place, it is the [pope] who annuls his own authority” (p. l^) “A virtue of obedience does not have to be: “Kicer when the situation has become revolutionary. ” (p. 17)

This is not a call to Pan^Aie. On the contrary, it is an invitation to a real obedience, one that is based on faith and is at its service:

I am not nobbling him to a process of demolition, but to the still valid laws that were regularly carried. I do not put myself outside the obligation to obey common to every Christian; to every upright man. But I say that this obligation does not exist with regard to the system set up by the revolution, whatever the official authority that sponsors it, the obligation to obey is deferred to the regular orders that, in force for more than ten centuries, have been invariably maintained since the codification of the Council of Trent, wise and holy orders, which I continue to observe. (p. 17)

In his finale, Father Calmel puts his finger on the wound. More than speculative considerations, it is often fear that holds back the priests and Jcs fîdcics iknslavoie of the heroic non possumus :

A fear of being ridiculed, of being hindered in their apostolic action, of being doomed to material insecurity. Everywhere the fear of sociological rejection. Too few are those who, for

the sake of the Lord and his name, do not care about the isolation of today and the uncertainty of tomorrow.

Weakness in the subordinates, fear became an instrument in the reformers. Obedience and humility are very beautiful and necessary virtues, which Father Calmel himself practiced in a remarkable way. But they were put forward by the innovators as a scarecrow for monks. They constituted a real blackmail. The best proof of this is that those who brandished this argument of obedience to impose their thought were very far from practicing it, whether to the magisterium of the past or to the reigning pope. Their threats were rather like exceptional measures

To a young girl who would soon receive the holy religious habit.

It is the ABC of modernism to make the faithful bend by blackmailing virtue and love of God, and abolishing, in the name of virtue, the indispensable means of formation and conservation. Modernism makes the victims walk in the name of obedience, thanks to the suspicion of pride on any criticism of the reforms, in the name of respect for the pope; in the name of missionary zeal, charity and unity “To force silence through fear,” wrote Cardinal Wyszynski on October 5, 1954, “such is the first task in the unholy strategy” Such was indeed the goal of this blackmail of obedience. It was a question of paralyzing, or of putting to sleep on the quilt of “virtue” the holy Catholic reaction. In private, and in order to protect his people against such a temptation, Father Calmel gave names; If one has understood both the principle of the revolution and its process of blackmailing virtue, all that remains is to refuse it - to distrust like the plague all the sleepers: “who are not intransigent like you”, and to hold and pray in peace

In the end, beyond the weapon of moralism and independently of particular intentions, this revolutionary strategy was based on a certain personalism, on an all too human conception of authority. To protect against this blackmail, it was necessary to return to a Christian conception of the Church and its hierarchy. The traditional position which refused any compromise with modernism was not at all a question of the person. It was enough to know that “the Church of Christ cannot change in its doctrine, its Mass, its government, its apostolate to the poor modern world, and that the inventions of Vatican II will dissipate one by one.

498-L “tfcof July 10, 1970.

499 - Interview of November 1971.

500 - Letter dated 3 July 1972.

501 - Letter of August 8, 1973.

502 - Oté /” dora Gérard Calver, Dem^m U chriUrmé. DMM. p. 159.

503-Letter dated August 8, 1973.

It does not matter then what the intentions and the share of responsibility of each party are.

On the occasion of the thirtieth anniversary of his ordination, he wrote;

What can I do to enlighten my brothers? It seems to me that I see the devil’s system more and more clearly, but how can I question the very Vicar of Christ without causing a scandal? (…)

Whatever the manner in which the Pope is implicated, it does not change what is our immediate duty - even if other duties are discovered later: our immediate duty is to refuse to make a pact with this destruction. (…)

(We want to settle) on the immutable dogma and on the Tradition in its living principle which is the immutable faith>”.

Moreover, in this resistance to the decisions of the highest authority of the Church, the Dominican felt supported and encouraged by the saints of history. And he called them to his aid: “Saint Leo II (680) who threw Tanatheme (in public) to his predecessor Honorius I” for having been, not a heretic, but of great cowardice in defending the faith of the Apostles. Saint Leo II, pray for us and defend us from the cowardice of Honorius VI”. “But in order to be able to imitate the saints without hypocrisy in their defense of the truth, it was necessary to begin by imitating them in their love of God and in their contempt for the world; “May we have the patience of the saints, as 1 Revelation says.

For the modernist revolution does not seem to be retreating much. (…) And the so-called traditional Christians, how many are fervent > Let us be so. Let us ask unceasingly for this grace.

In short, it was in the name of love of God and of faith, it was in the name of obedience that one had to refuse to obey. It was the romance that obliged one to separate oneself from “Rome”,

When authority fails, do not collude with its failure. Do not take the lead, but stay in your place. We are with Rome, but is Rome with itself?

This is the contemporary phase of the mystery of iniquity at work in the world. Already in 1955, Father Calm! was the victim of this double

language coming from Rome. Today, the dilenune was taking on a dizzying dimtnsion. Father Calmel explained this to the Dominican Sisters of the Holy Name of Jesus on the occasion of an extraordinary canonical visit to their congregation:

Above the apparently legal decisions of Rome, above its schemes, combinations and means, in short above a blinded, maneuvered, dominated Rome, there is the true Rome, the Rome of prudent and justified Christian Tradition. Above the Rome which, while saying the opposite, dissolves the Holy Mass, there is the Rome of the Mass of Saint Pius V, of Saint Gregory V and of Saint Leo. Above the Rome which, even though it claims the contrary, has destroyed almost all the religious houses by means of sessions and “aggiomant” democratic consultations, there is the Rome which approved the great orders and the small congregations. Above the obscure machinations of an (apostolic) visitor who hates in your houses the rare forts still standing of organized resistance to modernism, there are St. Pius V and St. Pius X and their saving measures for the Mass, Christian teaching, the religious state. (…). It is to the true Rome that you must obey. For the moment she is dominated and betrayed. But you are sure to obey this true Rome by accepting and doing only what favors your choices about the Mass, the school,

the Dominican religious state, under the direction of the General you have.

The law that governs and commands your decision is this one and not another. Like me for the Mass and the Dominican life. May Our Lord obtain for you to obey only the true Rome**.

Such words were a bit of a forerunner of Archbishop Lefebvre's magnificent Declaration of November 21, 1974, which will be discussed shortly.

However, it should be noted that such clarity and assurance were not self-evident. It was not without inner struggle, without personal questioning, that Father Calmel had arrived at such conclusions. The spiritual authors he had studied, on the one hand, and the theology courses he had received at Sainr-Maximin, on the other, had not prepared him for this vision of wisdom. His initial formation was lacking in the

509-Utiredu8jum 1972.

510 ' "The spiritual treatises teach us only a little ri

I mean by direct mode of exposition,

nM48.p.l2).

Insofar as it separated the institutional Church and the mystical Church, under the pretext of saving both:

What undoubtedly bothered me for a long time (without my knowing it) was the dislocation of the teaching that I had been given (and not only to me); to a treatise on the Church of a somewhat unreal and disembodied mysticism, one juxtaposed considerations on the vicar of Christ, all administrative and of a disarming authoritarianism. Now the Church lives from Christ, and the mystical body of Christ guards the Tradition of Christ (and his very sacrifice), governed by a vicar of Christ and the bishops united to him, - but which have their limits, alas! which can falter and which can only be followed in the light (not blindly), if at least we want to live from the Church and therefore from Christ. This makes our obedience both true and free^”.

To obey in the light, to follow Christ even when he requires us to follow him in the desert, such was the purpose that summarized the thought and guided the conduct of Father Calmel. Such was the pacifying and fortifying message that the Dominican gave to souls.

The Mysteries of the Kingdom of Grace, 1 .1

While the Second Vatican Council was in full swing and one could already witness the decadence of faith and morals among Christians, Father Calmel felt more and more inclined to preach the great truths of the faith. “For me,” he wrote on January 13, 1964, “I believe that I will work more and more at writing theological and spiritual ‘elevations. “Soon he made the decision “to write more and more about the mysteries of the faith” (January 19, 1964) and even to compose, when God wills, “a book whose first part will deal with the mysteries” (January 30, 1964). With time, this desire will only become more pronounced. In 1969, he affirmed: “As a minister, the more time goes by, the more I want to write only directly about the mystery of God. “(July 25, 1969)

The conferences that the preacher was led to give here and there had given him the opportunity to make his hand. The course on doctrine in Toulouse in 1964, for example, or the one given to the monks of Maylis in July of the same year, had forced him to think deeply and to formulate with clarity and precision what

that he would then put in writing. With time, the project became more precise. It will be a real “sum”. As for the title of the work, he hesitated: Cf l’/enr, or perhaps Le temps de l’Évangile (May 14, 1964), and soon he thought of a work of twelve chapters entitled lissai sur le Mystère du Christ. It was only later that Father Calmel decided on the title Les Mystères de l’Ordre dt la Grace and, finally, on Les Mystères du Royaume de la Grace, reserving for a later work an exhaustive treatise on Christ.

For this work, the meaning of which he understood better and better, Calmel counted on the collaboration of Mother Hélène Jamet. He had his conferences on this subject typed up and sent to her who, he wrote, “followed the composition of my book as it went along. As usual, the author had his readers constantly in mind. And to make his “book” “captivating” for them, he took pains to “reread and rewrite the Gospel and the Summa of St. Thomas”, and to “take up many times the chapters already written” to adapt them to his readership.

The ups and downs of his life as a preacher, the heavy workload of his articles in Itinéraires, especially those related to the liturgical reform of 1969, delayed the composition of the work considerably. But in 1971, he saw

the end in sight: “I will work on it as best I can for the Lord and for souls,” while counting on the support of the inhabitants of Heaven. On February 4, 1972, he had the joy of being able to write: “This morning I was able to transcribe a good half of the introduction to the book. I believe that it will be written without too much difficulty (the part that remains to be written: the Holy Trinity). Saint Thomas and the angels will help me to repeat, in noble language and in all fidelity, the common teaching of the Church, in our time of thick darkness. Finally, there were the last corrections: “You will not learn anything new,” he wrote humbly on March 3, 1972. You will only find grouped and cleaned up considerations and elevations already known. It will be my little homage as a preacher brother to the one who loved us so much and who wanted the priesthood and consecrated virginity. “Smile of Providence, The Mysteries of the Kingdom of Grace is completed and dated at one of the saints

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Calmel had chosen as his guide and advocate in these troubled times, at Domremy, on April 5, 1972.

If Father Calmel’s previous writings had already allowed his assiduous readers to guess the main lines of his thought and his spiritual life, Les Mystères h Royaume de la Grace will tell them much more clearly the secrets of his soul and of his prayer. Three words summarize very well, it seems to us, the spirit which animated him and the direction which he gave to souls, three words by which he defined evangelical morality:

Such are the marvelous and unamissable properties of the new law, it is appropriate to call it the law of freedom, lightness and truth,

The freedom of the soul in its own obedience to the precepts of the law was in line with his Thomistic doctrine of grace, of those “powerful, harmonious and noble inclinations” which “transcend the most beautiful attractions of nature, but penetrate and purify them” (p. 112).

The lightness to carry the yoke of the Lord came from his love. His insistence on the primacy of prayer, on the necessary growth of love, led his soul to forget itself and to leap into God at every manifestation of his will, whether it was the will to holiness or the will to suffer;

Pray; may prayer stabilize you in this infinite love; may it make you so much in communion with this love that you taste peace, beyond all discussion. (…) Only prayer, without bringing evidence, comforts and soothes us at the same time as it incites us to give our lives, each in our place and in the form that God wants, for the good of the chosen. Only prayer makes us dwell, in silence and love, in the glorious wounds of the Crucified One. Let us grow in Tamour; we will not understand more, but we will overcome a certain zone of anxiety*’*.

On the other hand, the law of love leads the soul to the truth. He who loves forgets himself and penetrates into the secrets of the beloved. In his treatise on the angels, Father Calmel invites the soul to expect from its guardian angel the “most precious gift of all: it will obtain for you the humility of one who looks, understands, disappears into the light, inattentive to his own person” (p. 147), it will establish your

515 - R.-Th, Calmel, /,” Mysteries of the Rtyaumede la Grdee. DM.VI, 2’ cd., 1990. A summary can be found at the end of this biography: see Appendix 9, page 638.

- The Mysteries of the Kingdom of Grace. 1997, p. 108.

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Now this life in truth necessarily leads to testimony. Light cannot fail to dispel darkness. On this subject, Father Calmel stigmatizes the false contemplatives who hide behind their retreat and the necessary peace of soul in order not to take sides, in order to flee the battles of the militant Church:

Especially in times when the Church is betrayed by religious authority, one of the most subtle forms of disobedience to God, as well as one of the most usual sophisms of the famous search for contemplative peace, consists in saying more or less consciously: "it is better to obey the men of the Church unconditionally than to obey God"; and to add : "since it is difficult to keep the peace of the soul when we agree to struggle to give witness to the faith and to the seven sacraments, we are allowed, under the pretext of preserving interior peace, to capitulate by putting on the forms; we are thus dispensed from the struggle that makes confessors or martyrs."

All things considered, this cowardice is the daughter of a false spirituality, for "it is the Spirit of God, the Spirit of love, who, dwelling in a fully docile soul, realizes in it, in one form or another, the supernatural contemplation; and through contemplation he prepares the soul for the heroism of love. "(p. 119) For Father Calmel, the witness of faith and the open struggle against the heresy of the present time were a requirement of love, the natural extension of the contemplative life, the law of holiness. For "holiness deserves to be called a heroism; heroism, in fact, in a general way, consists in the greatness of the soul carried to

the extreme point of voluntarily undergoing death for goods that are beyond us. “(p. 11(S) It is the law of love to risk everything to bear witness to the truth. “Living faith,” he will say in the second volume, “grows in the two directions of contemplation and martyrdom. ” (p. 193)

The Greatness of Jesus Christ

A year after the publication of the Mysteries of the Kingdom of Grace, Father Calmel presented to his readers a work that was more modest in size, but of great doctrinal importance. The theologian himself presented it as “the natural complement to the treatise on the Word

“ri deJésus-ariil. N.E.L.. 1973.

embodied in The Mysteries of the Kingdom of Grace” which had appeared the previous year^”. More than a mere addition of detail, Les Grandeurs de Jésus-Christ can be seen as the keystone of the Dominican’s doctrinal work, as is the treatise on the redemptive Incarnation in the Summa of Saint Thomas Aquinas. In this work of wisdom, Father Calmel goes back to the highest principle, the dogma of the hypostatic union.

All theology ends in Christology. And modern errors are there to confirm this; “The whole modernist enterprise of profanation and falsification of the Mass and the sacraments would not have been possible if the hierarchy and the Christian people, as a whole and with fervor, had held Christ for what he is. “(p. 10) That is why “we thought that this reminder of the mystery of Christ in itself was indispensable

in order to resist the pitfalls set up everywhere against the sacraments of Christ. ” (p. 11)

The first chapter is the most important of all, since it contemplates Christ in his being: a single, divine, eternal person, that of the Word, and two natures: the divine nature and the human nature. “Jesus and the Son of God are one and the same person”, “one principle of operation and suffering, acta et passa” (p. 15). It must be said in truth that “a divine person suffers and dies according to human nature” (p. 16). “It is in fact the same subject who possesses both the divine nature with its omnipotence and infinite holiness, and the human nature with its fragility and its terrible possibilities of distress and anguish. ” (p. 20)

Therein lies the mystery of our religion and the source of all others; “If the relationship between Jesus and the Word were such that there is ‘another and another someone’ (two persons), then Jesus would have no other relationship with the Word than that which is found in any righteous person (…): then there would be nothing mysterious left in our religion. ” (p. 19)

It is necessary to begin there, by contemplating the hypostatic union, the unique person of the Word assuming a human nature, because this union is the source of all the others. And the devil himself, who has always tried to “separate what God has united”, begins there, by affirming two persons in Christ, in order to be able to separate in man the divine (grace, charity, faith) and the human (soul, will and

Following these reminders, one can safely consider the attributes of Christ’s humanity: the fullness of grace as head

of the whole mystical body (ch. 2), the fullness of wisdom and knowledge (ch. 3), the “kingship” (ch. 4), the priesthood (ch. 5), redemption (ch. 6), judicial power (ch. 7).

Father Calmel’s study of Our Lord Jesus Christ ends with a call to conversion and sanctification. We cannot contemplate the Savior without “constantly bringing ourselves back to the consideration of the goods of grace which he wants to bestow upon us” (p. 91). It is to this, to a union of love with God, that theology must lead. At the end of his study, the author can only pray: “May the Holy Spirit give us an ever more penetrating understanding of the mystery of Our Lord Jesus Christ and of his charity which surpasses all science. ” (p-92)

Would these theological meditations make him forget the struggles of the day? In December, Father Calmel sent Archbishop Lefebvre an autographed copy of his book. At the bottom of the title page, one can read:

To Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre,

as a token of gratitude and affectionate admiration for his truly episcopal work of defense and formation of the Catholic clergy.

In the Immaculate Heart of Mary, 17 XII 1973, fifth anniversary of the birth in Heaven of Father A.-V. Berto.

R.-T. C.

sophc, too often adventurous, has maintained a singular thesis on the infused science of the Lord. A Lord would have enjoyed this science only more or less late. (…) As if the awareness that Jesus had of being One of the Trinity was not a light that shone immediately; absolute, indivisible, unsurpassable; as if Jesus could know himself as God, a little

less, a little more, according to the circumstances. "(p. 33) "As for the diminishing nature of this thesis, we see it immediately: this Christ, whom we are told is God, nevertheless begins, in the spiritual order, as

(p. 34) "Cardinal Journet, as one might have feared, took his friend's lead. "(See the article on Cardinal Journet in Vonu et tretera, 1967, n. 3, p. 236)

521 - "Even though it is properly of an interior, supernatural and priestly order, the kingship of Jesus does not fail to extend over the earthly kingdoms, over the temporal authorities, over the families of the Church and over the Church.

The great dilemmas

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Since his entry into the Dominican Order, Brother Marie-Thomas Calmel had given the best of himself to correspond to his vocation as a son of Saint Dominic, as a religious and as a priest. He had prayed, he had mortified himself, he had advised, he had preached orally and then in writing, he had given witness to the truth of Tradition against the innovators. However, he knew very well and often repeated that he was only a priest, that he could do no better than to fulfill his office as a preaching brother to those to whom he was sent. More than anyone else, he felt the limits of his mission and his competence. With his usual lucidity, he understood that the future of Tradition could only be assured by a bishop.

Not only by a bishop who preached, but by a bishop who acted in order to ensure the continuity of the priesthood and of the Mass of all time.

A book by Mgr Graber (1973), bishop of Regensburg in Germany, gave the Dominican the opportunity to express not only his personal thoughts but also the expectations of many priests and faithful

Father Calmel begins his review by rejoicing in the loyal analysis that the Bavarian bishop made of the crisis of the Church, going so far as to compare it to that of Arianism in the fourth century. However, U expresses a strong disappointment: “Well, I arrived at the last page, at the last line, at the last point without knowing anything about what this bishop does for the Mass of all time and against the new Masses; for the traditional constitution of the Church and against collegiality; to oppose finally the type of government, entirely new on the seat of Peter, inaugurated by the present pontiff” (p. 188).

We are very happy with the public homage paid by a bishop of 1973 to the great Saint Athanasius, but how can we not wish a bishop to imitate more closely the confessor of the Catholic faith in the face of Arian innovations? The hour is too serious for me not to say publicly to a bishop who writes for the public what many priests and faithful expect of him; we expect him to act; at a time when the missal, the ritual, the catechism, the constitution of the Church are hypocritically undermined and every day a little more threatened with dissolution, what is this bishop doing to maintain and defend them? What does he think of the degree of authority of the infinite innovations sometimes initiated, sometimes accepted, by the present pontiff and never canonically

522 - “Le livre de Mgr Graber”, llinmires n’ 181, mon 1974, p. 188.

reprobated? Many priests and faithful will begin to emerge from their confusion the day when, in every country, at least a few bishops will dare to take a clear stand in favor of the missal, the ritual, the catechism, and the government of the Church prior to Paul VI (p. 189), The time, in fact, is not to moan about the misfortune of the times, but to act. And who, better than a bishop, is authorized to do so?

As we already know, there was no lack of initiatives by individual priests or lay people. But it was often necessary to deplore the excessive control of these good people over worship and priestly life. The need for authority, even if only moral, was felt everywhere. Now, it could only come from a bishop.

This is why Father Calmel had the courage, mixed with respect, to address Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre “so that he would take the lead and speak, he the first, to the Christian people” A bishop’s word would have quite a different weight than that of a simple priest. In February 1974, he could rejoice;

I received Archbishop Lefebvre’s book: A Bishop Speaks. It is undoubtedly the stranglehold of modernism that is beginning to be loosened. About what priests and laity have been repeating for dbc years against modernism in the Mass, in the catechism, in the life of clerics and for fidelity to Tradition, about all this we can finally cry out: a bishop says it Nevertheless, the Church expected more from the episcopate. If it had to preach with authority, it had to

ordain priests. That is why, more than the preaching or the books of Archbishop Lefebvre, Father Calmel applauded the work of Ecône in which he saw the survival of the Catholic priesthood.

U understood well, first of all, that in order to train seminarians for the heavy tasks that awaited priests in these times of universal upheaval, the first thing to do was to set them apart, to prepare for them an asylum of prayer, study and peace that would be cut off from the world and from the system put in place by the religious revolution. Even before he could see the seminary of Ecône with his own eyes, Father Calmel gave it as an example to the Dominican Sisters of the Holy Name of Jesus of Toulon who were preparing, with the permission of their Superior General, to open the house of SaintPré.

523 - Interview of November 1972 about TA-P-S. (Association Progrès Spirituel), letter of September 15, 1973.

524 - Letters of October 9, 1972. of November 6, 1973525 - Letter of February 23, 1974.

Soon, Holy Providence was going to give him the great joy of getting to know Ecône. Archbishop Lefebvre invited him to preach at the Holy Week retreat in April 1974.

I The report that the Father made of his journey and his arrival in Valais is picturesque. It is worth reading, so much so that he appears in it in all his fantasy and his greatness of soul:

Very long trip. In Geneva, with the transfers from France to Switzerland, train missed: but I met the Swiss beggars of the waiting room: they do not disappoint the so necessary corporation of the beggars. Sion seemed to me relatively “hippified”.

Switzerland in this season (at least in Valais) is a festive country: birds singing everywhere, apple trees in bloom. Under my eyes, the mountain is steep and green and an inexhaustible waterfall. Concrete house, but relative soundproofing by “carpets” (I think it’s the name - and létymology?) which drink the noise; but the partitions don’t have carpets, which is a serious technical error, Rubber pillows: (…) Resting the head on rubber: these people don’t have

After this touch of a very French humor, Father Calmel goes on to talk about his heart, and a cry of admiration escapes

Here. house full of hope: a hundred future priests: the blood circulates. Superior who is a holy bishop. A very mixed faculty: this bishop, a pirate of God, has scoured the ecclesiastical oceans to gather a motley collection of professors®”.

11 adds a note of joy and hope:

Foundation from here under the double patronage of the Sacred Heart, the Immaculate Heart - Impression that the really new foundations want the patronage of the Immaculate Heart

Father Calmel’s first impression was that of a house of prayer, where Ion understood and wanted to live the priestly ideal in its entirety, and he was pleased to find an authentic religious spirit among many. This seemed to him the condition of survival for the priests of our time:

526-Lcareof April 5, 1974.

527 - Father Calmel found in Ecône “

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I believe that here they will come even closer to the religious state; they are already close enough. I do not see how they could not evolve towards these regular conditions to assure their future ministry, which will be that of “free bodies

How could he have told these seminarians anything other than what had been burning in his heart for thirty-three years? In a letter in February, he had expressed his intentions to a correspondent;

For the retreat at Ecône: please pray for them and for the preacher, I would like to give them a great sense of the priest (it is only right, this sense of the priest, if it is very great) and to present to them the ways of holiness in such a way that they will see that we must always advance in it, so that we will be consumed in charity when the high priest comes to take us”.

The instructions of the retreat were not recorded. We can regret this, but we can also rejoice that the Dominican was able to keep all the freedom he needed to pass on the message that was burning on his lips. The notes taken by a seminarian at the time, however, allow us to follow the thread of the retreat.

- April 7, 1974, Palm Sunday

From his very first conference, the preacher sets the tone: “To make us a martyr’s soul for the Catholic, traditional and Gregorian Mass. “Speaking to future priests, he wanted to direct their minds and hearts to the Mass. But he knows that the seminarians will have to live this priestly holiness in a climate of war. They will have to bear witness to God and the Church by bearing witness to the Mass for all time.

The Mass belongs to the Church. The new Mass belongs only to modernism. I keep the Catholic, traditional, Gregorian Mass, because it does not belong to modernism: they have no power over it. Modernism is the modernist system: it’s a virus. It’s contagious, it runs away.

A testimony is absolute. If I give testimony at the Catholic Mass, I must abstain from other Masses. It is like the grain of incense to the idols: it is one grain or none at all. Therefore, “not at all”.

must do it

The great dilemmas

. S April 1974, Holy Monday, 9 am.

diary: the duty to strive for holiness.

As future priests you are called especially to perfect love. Through the Mass, we are in fact united to the act of the greatest love. St. Thomas says: The priest is bound to strive for holiness even more than the religious (ii-ii, q. 184, a. 8). What is to be done then? To be concerned with love, right from the start. Put only God in our memory: Memorfui Dei et delectatus sum (Ps 76:4). We must ask creatures to forget us, not to remember us; but we must remember God so that he will remember us.

- April 8, 1974, Holy Monday, 5pm.

This charity, this union with God has a name, it is friendship with God, the friendship of the priest with Jesus. I no longer call you my servants but my friends” (Jn 15:15). “(Jn 15:15) Now to live in this friendship,

the so-called secular clergy must come closer to a regular life. There must be no worldly priests. There is a violent demand to strive for perfection in the one who celebrates Mass, who holds in his hands the body and blood of God.

In practice, this means;

- To disregard ourselves and our moods. To love is to ignore our inner barometer.

- Preach that Christ calls us all to perfection, to love him perfectly.

- Preaching the cross of Christ: the love of the Lord and how to live up to it.

- To forget ourselves and be happy to forget ourselves. Jealousy or rivalry is the will to power. An apostle forgets himself, he does not look back.

- April 9, 1974, Holy Tuesday, 9 o’clock.

How will this love be nourished and developed? In prayer.

If we are not contemplatives, we will not be true apostles. To speak of God in a way worthy of God, and to prepare for grace, contemplation is necessary; contemplation acquired

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of the truths of faith, and contemplation in prayer, conversation with God, in the theological sense.

It is the prayer of the religious of God; and the prayer of the friend: These two attitudes are compatible: the exultation of charity, the reverence of religion.

The prayer of the friend, we apply ourselves to it, but God Himself works it in us. For that, we must make the recollection in us.

After recalling the different types of prayer in the psalms, he concludes: “Prayer is therefore a conversation of faith, trust and love with God, of the love of which we are certain. It is a silence of love with God of which we are sure. “

- April 9, 1974, Holy Tuesday, 5 p.m.

For this work of holiness, love and contemplative prayer, we can count on the Holy Spirit: Accipietis virtutem supervenienlis Spiritus Sancti (The Holy Spirit will descend upon you and you will be clothed with strength) (Acl,8).

For that, let’s not have any illusions about our time. To see the dangers multiplied tenfold for us at present:

- activism. 11 is a human activity that believes it can replace grace. Let’s find the time for quiet prayer.

- disarmed pity, that is to say, no longer believing in the occasions of sin.

The first remedy to these defects is to be in God; with his doctrine transformed into prayer. Let us become souls of prayer.

- April 10, 1974, Holy Wednesday, 9 o'clock.

It was by entrusting them to the Blessed Virgin that Father Calmel left the seminarians of Ecône:

We have to ask her, the Blessed Virgin, to educate us, that she doesn't let anything pass us by. We must say to her, as to the Lord, "Don't get in the way with me! "She educates us in the following two directions:

- The beginning of our apostolate. For example by forming rosary groups.

- May the Blessed Virgin keep us faithful to the true Mass. She tells us, "Do not go to the Mass of the new religion! "

The preacher had learned that some seminarians, during their vacations, still allowed themselves to attend the new Mass, provided that they were not too busy.

Witness is necessary: let us beg the Queen of Martyrs to give us the virtue of strength, quiet strength, theological sustenance, Adamantine stability. May she educate us in strength.

The last words of the preacher were those of hope. Our Lady promised at Fatima; "Finally, my Immaculate Heart will triumph. "

Father Calmel returned from his stay in the Valais seminary delighted. "I am very happy with Ecône and my ministry there. "Certainly, he could not help comparing the life of the seminary to the formation and graces he had received at

Saint-Maximin. In this regard, he regretted that St. John of the Cross was “little read” and that “the violent desire for holiness is not awakened in everyone. He would have liked to find his own desire for perfection in those faithful priests whose immense responsibility in the present world he sensed. Moreover, he enjoyed

‘°Zc traditional. Cf. fe/fte awc nmd and éien><te “n n’

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knows how to foresee the evolution of the seminary towards a more “framed” state of life, “a state of life that true resistance, or renewal, will demand”, a priestly ideal that is “adapted to present-day necessities; and the parishes, when they are revived, will be guarded and nourished by priests of another model than the ‘parish priests’ who still exist”. He spoke about this to Archbishop Lefebvre, who shared his great ideal.

The mutual esteem and the communion of thought that united the preacher and Archbishop Lefebvre were to be manifested a few months later. On November 21, 1974, the courageous archbishop published a Declaration whose light and strength were clearly inspired. What a joy it was for Father Calmel to find again, under an episcopal pen, what had been the core of his life and his preaching.

When he read it, he was in the priests’ refectory of the house of SaintPré. A witness, then 17 or 18 years old, tells us: “Mother Hélène gave the text to Father Calmel. He got up and began to read. He read and reread the text aloud, going from one side of the room to the other, interrupting his

reading to let his heart speak: “Yes, that’s it, that’s exactly it. “Seized with a strong emotion, the Dominican exulted. A bishop had spoken. A successor of the Apostles was making the voice of the immutable Tradition heard.

In response to Father Calmel’s call to his people to “meditate and make known” “the decisive Declaration of our dear and venerated bishop Marcel Lefebvre”, we give here the text;

We adhere with all our heart and soul to Catholic Rome, guardian of the Catholic faith and of the traditions necessary to maintain this faith, to eternal Rome, teacher of wisdom and truth.

On the other hand, we refuse and have always refused to follow the neo-modernist and neo-Protestant Rome, which was clearly manifested in the Second Vatican Council and after the Council in all the reforms that came from it.

All these reforms, in fact, have contributed and still contribute to the demolition of the Church, to the ruin of the priesthood, to the annihilation of the Sacrifice and the sacraments, to the disappearance of religious life, to a

536-Letter of December 31

537- *iràcra*ra. January 1975

s to submit to it in any way.

The only attitude of fidelity to the Church and to Catholic doctrine, for our salvation, is the categorical refusal to accept the reform,

That is why, without any rebellion, bitterness or resentment, we continue our work of priestly formation under the umbrella of the magisterium of all time, convinced that we

cannot render a greater service to the holy Catholic Church, to the Supreme Pontiff and to future generations. Therefore, we hold fast to all that has been believed and practiced in faith, morals, worship, teaching of the catechism, formation of the priest, institution of the Church, by the Church of old and codified in the books published before the modernist influence of the Council, while waiting for the true light of Tradition to dispel the darkness that darkens the sky of eternal Rome.

In so doing, with the grace of God, the help of the Virgin Mary, of St. Joseph, of St. Pius X, we are convinced that we will remain faithful to the Catholic and Roman Church, to all the successors of Peter, and to the Church of Rome.

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tfideles dispensatores mysteriorum Domini Nostri Jesu Chr' Spiritu Sancto" (faithful dispensers of the mysteries of Our Lord Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit). Amen. "gneur

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Hope against hope

The incessant running of the preacher of the faith, the worries of the turmoil that the Church was going through, the overabundant correspondence, the writings that mobilized all his energy, the life of prayer and penance completed the wear and tear on the already fragile health of Father Calmel.

In mid-October 1973, while he was in Toulon, he suffered a syncope of a new kind that led him to call a priest to administer the sacraments. He saw himself "on the verge of death".

As usual, he took advantage of this new trial to raise his eyes to God. "I will take advantage of this strange and unexpected crisis to live even closer to the Lord. At least that is my greatest desire"'. " "How we long for the Lord to sanctify us completely and without delay when we see the unpredictable way in which he can call us back to himself.' "

The good Lord was indeed preparing and purifying his servant for the final battle. In the midst of the general collapse of Christianity and Catholic works, Father Calmel would have to build. Before he passed away, the theologian

and father of souls would have to give a last light. But in order to do so, he had to disappear. Providence was making him stronger, depriving him of all human resources so that he would place his hope only in Providence.

538 - Letter of October 19, 1973.

539-Letter of October 18, 1973.

540-Letter dated October 19, 1973

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St. Andrew of the Immaculate Heart

The new facilities which had been granted to Father Calmel in his relations with the Dominican Sisters of the Holy Name of Jesus had allowed him to enlighten and strengthen them during the troubles which followed the reform of the Mass and the sacraments. They were also the occasion to support them in the painful choices that were to lead to the foundation of the house of the Immaculate Heart in SaintPré (Brignoles).

Only the part that the Dominican took in these events interests us here. However, in order to evaluate it at its true value, it will be good to go back a little in time and understand the situation that was imposed on the Dominican teaching sisters.

The first difficulty they encountered was the French government’s school laws and the attitude of the episcopate.

As early as 1942, a “comprehensive plan for education and national teaching” had been prepared by Paul Langevin (president of the Ligue des Droits de l’Homme in 1945) and Henri Wallon (collaborator of the newspaper L’Humanilia, Minister of National Education in General de Gaulle’s government in 1944). It was set up little by little. Private schools were to receive state subsidies in order to be placed under its control. Unfortunately, none of the bishops, except for one, no priest and no leader of the A.P.E.L. (Association des Parents de l’Enseignement Libre) reacted against this project which tended to absorb Catholic education and make it an organ of the State. In May 1958, the national congress of the A.P.E.L., which gathered nearly eighty thousand people, ratified the affair. A declaration was imposed on those present, which ended with these words: “The Congressmen call with all their might for legislation inspired by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and finally realizing true justice for parents and teachers of free education. “

On December 31, 1959, a law prepared by Charles de Gaulle’s Prime Minister, Michel Debré, and the Minister of National Education, the socialist Boulloche, was passed. The first article of the law sets the tone:

The State proclaims and respects the freedom of education. The teaching placed under the regime of contracts is subject to the control of the State: the establishment, while preserving its own character, must give this teaching in the total respect of the freedom of conscience. All children, without distinction of origin, opinion or belief, are entitled to

The establishments bound by these contracts of association were therefore to follow the rules and programs of public education, and the courses were to be entrusted to teachers who were either subject to the State by contract, or designated by the Academies.

On November 17, 1960, a circular from the Ministry of National Education already stated: “It is advisable to refuse the insertion in the contract of any formula which, mentioning the denominational character of the teaching provided, would be contrary to the freedom of conscience affirmed in article 1 of the law.

The attitude of the Church of France in the face of this government takeover was one of rallying. In order to neutralize any attempt at reaction on the part of certain A.P.E.L., the General Secretariat of Catholic Education took away the right of the leaders to negotiate with the State. They had to align themselves with the positions of the General Secretariat (circular of Mgr Cuminal, 1964).

For the Dominican Sisters, it was a matter of life and death. The pressure was so great that the Congregation thought it wise to accept simple contracts for their houses (1962). In a very practical way, in Toulon, we saw teachers come to us, sent by the diocesan Catholic teaching secretariat, divorced and remarried, young people living very badly, some of them not even Catholic.

To this was added the “school map”, that is to say the distribution imposed by the diocesan secretariat which claimed to take away from the establishments this or that section, this or that class, under the pretext of a better distribution of the forces of Catholic teaching. This amounted to a dislocation and a levelling down of the

schools and to the imposition of contracts of association and, little by little, of co-education.

In addition to the purely academic question, there was the question of chaplains and catechism. It is clear that the purpose of the reforms was to instill in all Catholic children the innovations that were taking place in the Church.

In all the dioceses, the bishops imposed on the sisters priests who followed or even anticipated the progressive trend. Not all of them had the firmness of the prioress of Toulon. The bishop of Toulon. Bishop Barthe, in fact proposed several priests among the most progressive of the diocese. The Mother Prioress, Mother Marie-François Dupouy, had to refuse five in succession. Her resistance was blessed by God when, for Christmas 1964, Canon Antoine Cutajar, a former archpriest of the cathedral of Constantine, aged

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Roger-Thomas Calmel, sixty-four years old. He followed the sisters to their foundation in SaintPré where he died on March 19, 1992.

To the question of chaplains was added that of catechisms. Very precise instructions were given to the authors of the new catechisms. It was imperative that they follow a “Compulsory Fund for the use of the authors of adaptations”, especially in the middle school classes. This text, elaborated in 1966 and adopted by the Plenary Assembly of the French Episcopate held in Lourdes in October 1966, was to serve as the basis for the “Catechetical Journeys” and other works spread in the dioceses. On many points, their content represented an abandonment or a watering down of the faith. To the objections that the prioress of the Saint-Dominique course in Toulon made to the diocesan director in

charge of the catechism, she only obtained the argument of authority: “It is an episcopal decision. Our bishops wanted it and all the experts agreed.” “It would be better to scuttle ourselves,” concluded Mother Marie-François Dupouy, “than to enter into the spiral of the modernist system. “Mother Hélène Jamet, who was always the soul of the house in Toulon from the spiritual, intellectual and practical points of view, helped the mothers to see clearly and to follow God’s will in peace. The mothers were also greatly encouraged by a visit they made to Archbishop Lefebvre in January 1970, who was resting at La-Croix-Valmer (between Cavalaire and Saint-Tropez).

In the face of such modernist propaganda, most of the establishments of the Congregation of the Dominican Sisters of the Holy Name of Jesus had more or less obeyed the Direction of Free Education of their respective dioceses. The chaplains, often in clergy or civilian clothes, adopted the liturgical innovations. However, in July 1967, the General Chapter of the Congregation elected Mother Anne-Marie Simoulin as Superior. To the sisters who had asked in 1966 for an aggiomamento of the Constitutions in the sense of Vatican II, she answered, based on a letter from Father Nicolas, that the Constitutions had been transformed in 1953 and did not need to be revised. She obtained that the Chapter of 1968 clearly rejected co-education and the grouping of schools according to the “school map”. She supported the resistance of the Sisters of Toulon against the pressure of the Catholic Education Direction of the diocese and came in person on April 28, 1969, to preside over the General Assembly of the parents of the students. She herself wrote a very energetic letter to Father de Sentcnac, director of the Enseignement Libre de Toulon, dated December 17, 1969. At that time, only the house of Toulon

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At that time, only the house of Toulon clearly declared itself to the Bishopric, to the parents and to the teachers, as not admitting the new Mass, nor the postconciliar liturgy, nor the new catechisms, nor the possibility of the contract of association with all its consequences, nor that of the fragmentation of the school.

Was the situation sustainable? And what about the congregation? A good number of the sisters, indeed, were increasingly influenced by the world and by progressivism. Some thought they were allowed to watch television, to introduce French readings in the breviary, or to show sympathy for ecumenism.

In this perplexity, Mother Hélène Jamet and Mother Marie-François Dupouy requested an interview with Mother Anne-Marie Simoulin, Mother General, at the end of the 1969-1970 school year. They presented to her the need to gather in communities the sisters who had chosen fundamental intangible options, with the assurance of having a prioress who did not compromise with modernism.

Ü®’ General of the Fathers of the Holy Spirit, had written

August 15, 1968:

From now on, the time is no longer for compromises, for the dialogues of sour s… 11 must choose… It is up to us to encourage all the healthy initiatives that are in keeping with the true tradition of the Church. New religious societies and seminaries are needed, born and developed according to the secular norms of holiness… Already desdouloureuse, but necessary in nfvtr: t’r r religious. Some divide, others are

will divide. Those will have vocations that remain faithful to the teachings of the Church, to its holy traditions, the others will dissolve and disappear.

The internal divisions within the Congregation of the Holy Name of Jesus had become more violent because of the introduction of the new Mass at the end of 1969. These divisions led the Mother General to propose, on November 17, 1971, that the sisters who had a bad conscience follow the firm position of the Congregation, so that they could live “in communities where they could lead an integral teaching religious life, but in accordance with what they considered to be faithful to the Church. This measure did not prevent tensions, accentuated by the courageous

541 - Archbishop Lefebvre, Pastoral Letters, “Nos raisons detre oprimisccs August 15, 1995, pp. 324-325.

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Anne-Marie Simoulin expressed her refusal of the new Mass in December 1971. The unrest in the communities forced Mother General and her Council to ask for an appeal to Rome through the Ecclesiastical Assistant, Father Nicolas.

On January 21, 1972, the Sacred Congregation of Religious appointed an Apostolic Visitor, Father Van den Broeck, a Premonstratensian. Van den Broeck, a Premonstratensian. He wasted no time in making a canonical visit to the Congregation in February. In August 1972, the powers of the Roman Visitor were extended so that he could prepare for the General Chapter of the Congregation which was to take place in July 1973. Obviously, his purpose was to prepare

the minds of the people for the election of a superior who would be in line with the conciliar orientations.

When the situation became untenable, the former prioress of Toulon, then mistress of the professed novices in Toulouse, Mother Marie-François Dupouy, wrote a kind of memorandum to the Mother General, dated January 1, 1973. After having thanked her superior for the courageous measures she had taken in the Congregation and having taken stock of the state of things, she came to the following conclusion:

Shouldn’t we regroup our forces in three solid secondary houses - three and no more - and thus have, once again, communities of about twenty professed sisters and two clearly oriented parish schools? (…)

He specifies that the first fidelity is to maintain the traditional liturgy and Ordo, the Latin Dominican Office, the catechism of all time, orthodox doctrinal teaching, Christian education supported by groups of piety (all things for which the Mother General fought so strongly).

The thing was urgent, she said, and had to be undertaken before the next elective chapter, otherwise “we fear that the congregation will forever be incapable of a real recovery. The idea of a foundation independent of modernizing pressures and state contracts was thus gaining ground.

However, the General Chapter of the Congregation of the Holy Name of Jesus, convoked on March 11, 1973, could not take place. Perhaps fearing the re-election of Mother Anne-Marie Simoulin, the Sacred Congregation of Religious forbade the holding of the Chapter by a letter of March 31, 1973. The “outgoing” superior retained her power until the

next chapter, under the authority of the Roman visitor, Father Van den Broeck.

The 1973-1974 school year began in an understandable climate of anxiety. What would be the future of the congregation and of its frankly traditional orientations that inhabited a good part of the

On November 1, 1973, Mother General took advantage of a ceremony to bring together ten of the most important mothers of the Congregation. This was the occasion for Mother Hélène, supported by Mothers Marie-François Dupouy, Raymond-Marie Berthommé and other mothers present, to express simply but firmly her way of seeing the situation. In order to save the congregation, it was necessary to open a house, with a novitiate, which would lead the life of the congregation in “its absolute purity”. In a very practical way, the mothers of Toulon thought that the time had come to sell the Samt-Dommique course in Toulon. In order to break the contract with the State, the only solution was to close this house and to open another one, outside the city. The sisters would then have a free hand to follow their constitutions in full. This was to be done during the 1973-1974 school year, before the next General Chapter or before any new decision from Rome.

Mother Anne-Marie Simoulin granted permission for the transfer of the Saint-Dominique course in Toulon at the end of the 1973-1974 school year, and had the decision confirmed by the Council.

From then on, events were going to rush. With the help of a spiritual son of Father Calmel, the property of SaintPré (La Celle, Brignoles) was found for the celebration of the Immaculate Conception in 1973. We were able to sell the various houses and the land of the school in Toulon easily.

In Toulouse, too, things were about to accelerate. On January 11, 1974, the Sacred Congregation of Religious appointed Father Decabooter, a Trappist, abbot of Sainte-Marie du Désert, as religious assistant to the Congregation of the Holy Name of Jesus, replacing Father Nicolas who had resigned, with the responsibility of preparing and presiding over the next General Chapter. In spite of these precautions, and judging the congregation to be at an impasse and the resistance to modernizing innovations to be too strong, Rome intervened on 27 mat 1974. The Congregation of Religious interrupted the mandate of Mother Anne-Marie Simoulin ("terminated by right in 1973 but extended in fact"), and appointed an administrator who would govern the congregation with the help of Father Decabooter.

What role did Father Calmel play in the outcome of this case?

One remembers the links which united the Dominican to the women teachers from his ordination in 1941 until 1955 and, after his banishment, until the 1970s. The numerous meetings, facilitated since 1968, had allowed Father Calmel to enlighten and strengthen the spirits on the events of the life of the Church or of the world. We saw this in particular with regard to the liturgical revolution of 1969. One can imagine with what interest, and even with what concern, he envisaged the future of the Congregation of the Holy Name of Jesus which included so many of his spiritual daughters and in which he had strongly accentuated the authentic Dominican spirit. Mother Hélène Jamet noted in November 1973:

You know that the health of the soul, for our dear Father, is always admirable, capable of restoring to health all the souls that offer themselves to his healing by the grace of God. 11 made him his priest and son of St. Dominic and gave him to us as Father. For all eternity we will thank the Lord for this blessing.

While remaining very respectful, this paternity lifted souls; the Father advised the sisters as much as they wished. Mother Marie-François Dupouy, who played such an important role in these events, humbly admits ;

We were following the chobt of the Father. It was not only us, poor little sisters, who could have resisted. Every time I had to visit an authority, I had seen, or phoned or written to Father Calmel. There were things I didn’t know. I was young.

As for the question of contracts, he gave us a lot of guidance. He always answered at length when we wrote to him about what we could accept or not. Thanks to him, the community of Toulon saw that it was absolutely necessary to refuse the contracts.

As soon as Mother Anne-Marie Simoulin was elected Mother General, Father Calmel maintained frequent relations with her. A small incident even provided the opportunity for simple and profound explanations. While he had planned to spend the Christmas holidays of 1970 in Toulon and to stay there for a few weeks, he was forbidden access to the Cours Saint-Dominique, no doubt because of an intervention by Father Nicolas. Father Calmel and the Mother General were able to explain themselves and achieve a “rapprochement” which “comforted” k Dominican

Hope against hope

When Mother Anne-Marie Simoulin manifested her determination to remain attached to the traditional liturgy (December 1971), there was an outburst of anger (Father Nicolas, some Dominican Fathers and some “JtiOEurs” against this decision. Father Calmel strongly encouraged her and incited many sisters to support her. After a meeting with her, he

icrivaitsajoie:

Seen Mother General; she holds her own; 91 sisters (including all the young ones) agree with her on everything, including the good Mass. I ask Our Lady that Rome (which has become the false Rome) does not take care of them.

This prayer was not answered, as we have seen. During the canonical visit of Father Van den Broeck in February 1973, Father Calmel urged the friars to refuse absolutely to “allow themselves to be bogged down in the quicksand of no one’s puerions. (...) What is at issue are the choices made against the Church of all time and against eternal Rome in the midst of a collegialized, itmodernist Church that dares to give itself as true ‘*’. “

The visit was an opportunity for the sisters to give witness “as Dominican teachers of their faith in the true Mass, the true consecrated life, the true education, the true order of St. Dominic and St. Thomas. The Roman Visitor was “the emanation of a modernist colltgiality and a Roman congregation dominated by collegialities, by the emissaries of Villot and by the transmission belts of parallel hierarchies, more or less Masonic, installed in Rome. imt is no longer in Rome. “It is in the name of the Rome of all time that “d tàibic remain inflexible on the choices of the Tradition.

Father Calmel could not help but think, on the occasion of this Roman inspecdon, of the canonical visit that had led to his banishment in 1954. In a letter, he drew out the common points and the divergences: In 1954, I was the Father who had to be dismissed, with the ulterior motive that, once my disappearance was obtained, the alignment of the congregation with a “current” that was seeking itself (the federalist current of Father Paul Philippe) would become easier.

Ü3 - Letter of January 24, 1972.

ptioiu Dominican teachers. The aim was to mow down little by little the cungteguouiu arin de ttucua

In 1972, it was the congregation that was to be destroyed with the firm intention that once this liquidation was completed, postconciliar religion would be freed in France from the opposition of a well-directed and well-equipped fort. (…) In 1972, it is a question of putting an end to an institution of the Church of all time, of traditional education and of eternal Rome, (…)

In 1954, you had to go beyond the human, a human that adorned itself with sublime and pure titles: apostolic mission, unity to be safeguarded, fraternal charity to be promoted, observances to be kept, authority of the Vicar of Peter to be respected. What lay beneath these titles was, above all, jealousy, the desire for advancement, servility, hypocrisy.

In 1972, you have to overcome the revolution in clergyman and pastoral ring; not only the human vileness, but using

these vilenesses, the revolution installed in the Church which passes itself off as the true Church which claims to be from Rome and the Pope; and which continues to take advantage of the good old titles always dear to the ecclesiastical world: fervor to be restored, unity of love, fraternal charity to be preserved, authority of the vicar of Peter to be respected*.

Faced with such a maneuver, which obviously wants to “abuse your obedience,” he told the sisters, they must “not waver one millimeter,” speak out and stand their ground no matter what the consequences:

False mystics may see in this an obstinacy if not a fanaticism worthy of Port-Royal; a sectarian spirit; a prodigious attachment to one’s own sense. In reality, it is the simplicity of the dove prescribed by the Lord himself because it is fidelity to the true Rome, to the apostolic Tradition. The moment when this attitude would begin to displease the Lord would be the moment when it would become complicated by human calculations or pride.

To all of them, the Father preached serenity and confidence. For, he said, “the Blessed Virgin is stronger than the visitors. She provides and will provide in the best way for the establishment of the faithful sisters. Following an interview with the Mother General, he wrote: “She is courageous, I urge her to sanctify herself in peace, that is to say, by not taking into account what the visitor may say for good (?) or for bad**”. “Above all, he encouraged the young Mother General to “have recourse to Mother Hélène”, who had been her superior and who had a very good life.

Hope against hope

In this old woman who had proved herself in tragic situations, all the sisters would find an example of firmness and prudence, but also of the peace and modesty necessary in these troubled times

In the light of these events, Father Calmel's thoughts on the future became more precise. As early as December 1969, the day after his famous declaration of refusal of the new Mass, he had asked as a "Christmas miracle" that the sisters who so desired "be grouped by their gei ray (even if it means closing houses) around true priests who do not compromise [...]".

As the pressure from Rome, the French episcopate and the State became stronger and more explicit, this idea became more and more obvious to him. It was necessary "to move now towards houses without contract with groups of parents who consciously want to assure the transm sions that you have chosen before God to assure: the Mass of Saint Pius V Gregorian - Latin - the good morals of Christian culture".

The situation of the sisters and the schools was becoming more and more unbearable. To a sister who was appointed in 1972, in spite of her protests, to a house where the new Mass was being celebrated, Father Calmel advised her to accept this appointment, but to go to Mass only once a week.

Some sisters, even the prioress of a house, tried to justify the acceptance of new things with a missionary spirit. The latter said that it was necessary to make "missionary schools". Father Calmel spoke out strongly against this "murderous confusion". France is not a mission country, it is an ancient Christianity in a time of apostasy:

The only Christian school in such countries is simply what has always been called a Christian school: teaching both the faith and the humanities in the light of the faith. But the more powerful the apostasy becomes, the more such schools are marked by a double function of substitution: love of the good Mass and of the Catholic liturgy.

550 - Letter tiii November 13, 1972.

551 - Letter of March 28, 1973.

552 - Lertre of 19 December 1969.

These are not missionary schools. They are schools that are and remain Christian in a modernist and apostolic context.

It is deadly, murderous, disastrous to call a Christian school a missionary school in a country and for a time of apostasy. And if you call yourselves missionaries, you will think more about “adaptations” than about maintaining the living Tradition (adapting to what? to the new religion and that’s it). You will let the children enter the religion of now. The beautiful work! Banish the misleading term “missionary school”, want and continue to make a Christian school for children who are threatened everywhere by the modernist apostasy”.

To maintain this course, it was necessary “to be more and more categorical, to regroup the houses on the Mass. Not to accept any compromise with sisters or priests who have

accepted the revolution”. “Whatever the outcome of the next chapter.

we will not be able to continue as we have until now. Why not? First of all, because the disintegration of the faith (catechism) of the Mass (children’s and sisters’ Mass) of the sacraments (with the preparation given to the children) has not been stabilized and cannot be stabilized. The other reason is that the majority of the sisters have accepted with closed eyes the progressive slide, this growing destruction, while a small fraction, on the other hand, feel that they cannot make a pact or raise girls with a runaway liturgy. (…)

In the future, the fundamentally traditional and anti-modernist positions will, by force, be much sharper. Among other things, because the congregation will not only be watched by the eye of Moscow, but remotely controlled by Moscow (Van den Broeck and the bishops)

Father Calmel invited the sisters to consider their situation in the light of that of the whole Church:

The congregation and the schools naturally have a reason to be only as living elements of the overall resistance to modernism and in the overall fidelity to Tradition (I say overall because

554 - Encrcricn

of February 1973. March 17, 1973.

To hope against all hope

553

There are, in fact, a few islands everywhere). But this is only possible if your houses escape from the dioceses (this has been done, and we must always see to it that the chaplains are taken care of), from the State (this has not been done: contracts). (…)

A magazine is not a school… But what Madiran did (and succeeded in doing) for a magazine (with a financial “hole” to start with) when he chose the mass, and what Ousset refused (in order to keep people and underneath… and he will lose everything), your congregation must do.”’

It was well understood, moreover, that this courage in the face of threats from Rome went hand in hand with a great loyalty to the superiors of the Order and the Congregation. This openness was part of the Dominican heritage that Father Calmcl had received at Saint-Maximin and that he was trying to maintain:

From so many examples I retain the grace of the Order, which is first of all that of contemplating the truth, and then, in relationships both fraternal and from subject to superior and vice-versa, of telling the truth, of preventing the darkness. How to say: let the wounds breathe, instead of hiding them. Superiors and subjects die from the asphyxiation of half truths (because they are only half loved) (and also because they only half desire the truth).

When I think of St. Vincent Ferrier appealing to his friend Gregory XII and, in the end, dismissing the one he had taken up in public with these words: Ossa arida audite verbum Dei… (Dry bones, listen to the word of God). When I think of the Alexandrian cardinal (Ghislieri, the future Saint Pius V) opposing head-on the nepotism of Pius IV, I say to myself that there is a grace proper to the Order that is no longer very much alive in our degenerate times. Nothing of the "timoration" that "stalls" in order not to cause pain. In saying this, I know that we have to carry our truth and the truth of those we are responsible for more and more before God, but in order to be able to say it. Prudence, but prudence that is one with greatness. The greatness of love".

In order to achieve and maintain this drill and simplicity, it was necessary to intensify one's life of union with God. This trial was certainly a call from Providence to "a true conversion of all (…); then to a witness of fidelity and an effort to arm and defend those who come to you (…) If there is more fervor, there will be more understanding of the faith (…). (…) If there is more faith, there will be more understanding of faith. If there is this mtelligcnce

"M.ettrcof30imrsl973.

■ St. Vincent Fcrricr. St. Pico V, St. Thomas, St. Domin

greater, daughters and parents will be animated to defend themselves; to enter into your "defense system""

He himself preached by example. In the summer of 1973, Mother Hélène could note:

All the sisters who come to our house on vacation and who have not seen him for a long time are dazzled by his holy serenity and the lucidity of his vision of the Church’s misfortunes

His sometimes fierce strength was animated by a great charity, as if illuminated by a peace that came from Heaven. A few months later, he would invite the sisters to live intensely in the Immaculate Heart of Mary to “draw closer to him with holy desires, with total interior docility, with attention to not satisfying ourselves and in ourselves, and then he himself will provide for your defense and establishment’®. And whatever the trials, “in the dark night, do not cease to sing and bless’®”.

Besides, from now on, it was necessary to walk. This is why he encouraged the transfer of the Saint Dominic course in Toulon to a house “not too far from Toulon (because of the Sunday “parishioners”) which would allow the sisters who wanted to and the novices (that makes 25!) to live as true Dominican teachers: free from contracts, from parents who were not very determined, from secular programs”®. He even suggested a name for the future house: “The School of the Angelus (since the Annunciation already exists)”. But on his side, he feels the weight of the advice he gives and he asks for prayers to know how to give “sure but unobtrusive advice; it is the work of God”. It is on the prayer of the sisters, the children and the families, it is on the immaculate that the foundation will depend.

What joy he felt when he learned that a “quiet house on a hill (halfway up) in the woods near Brignoles” had been found during the novena in preparation for the feast of the Immaculate Conception; he was able to visit it on December 18, 1973.

After having found this property for sale, it was necessary to buy it. A few laymen (Messrs. Pierre Castellan, Davion, Demolins) were called in to get their advice on this delicate financial operation. They unanimously advised

560 - Sermon of July 1, 1973 to the sisters of Toulon.

561 - Letter from Mother Helene, August 27, 1973.

562 - Interview of February 17, 1974.

563-Letter of April 20, 1974.

564-Letter of November 5, 1973.

not to embark on this business, given the purchase price and the lack of means. Father Calmel, "who had a flair for it", as one of them recounts, told them instead with great assurance: "go ahead with the operation". He was right, indeed. The sale of the houses in Toulon and donations from benefactors made the acquisition of SaintPré possible.

Nevertheless, more than the financial difficulties, Father Calmel could see the objections that would be made to the creation of such a school: "and so many girls from whom we cut ourselves! He answered them with his usual lucidity:

It's a bunch of hooey! There is no other way (in 1974) to show families and children the absolute of education in Christ than to "cut oneself off". Archbishop Lefebvre was the first to see that there is no other way to form future priests in the absolute sense of the priesthood and to show this to all Christians, than by withdrawing these young people to

the depths of Helvetia and far from their dioceses from which they are “cut off”.

And then these reasoners of the “cut themselves” do not believe in the primacy of prayer. They believe that it is their work and their passion to do something, they believe that this is what saves souls**.

There remained, of course, the delicate question of the link of this house with the congregation. Even if the foundation had been accepted by the Mother General and her council, what would happen to the next superior who, no doubt, would have the profile of the new Rome?

In March 1974, Father Calmel believed that an amicable separation was still possible and remained very serene, since everything had been entrusted to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, and the foundation was to be made in her honor

For his spiritual daughters, Father Calmel saw no other way out. The chobt of SaintPré was in line with their vow “to strive for perfection by giving unequivocal witness to modernism.

He congratulates one of them in these words:

My dear daughter.

You have done very well to ask for debt assigned to the foundation of St. Pre. Whatever the name, the reality is a foundation:

566 - Interview of February 16, 1973.

567-Letter dated March 11, 1974.

568-Letters dated April 5 and May 25, 1974. 569-Letter dated May 8, 1974.

foundation to respond to the present needs of the resistance. (…) Ubbéissance is currently placed in the very exceptional situation of having to join a foundation in order not to betray what dictated your entry into religion. It is important to see that the profession you have made is placed in this perspective. You should not reason as in times of peace when belonging to any house ensures indifferently (if not perfectly) the conditions of fidelity to the profession

The intervention of Rome, made public on June 3, 1974, did not change the situation. It rather accentuated the urgency of the new house. All the more so since the reasons given by the religious assistant were clear. Father Calmel translated them as follows: “It is inadmissible that sisters like these should dare to cast suspicion on the innovations of the Council and the bishops. The innovations destroy the faith (…), but that doesn’t matter: unconditional obedience because ‘we are the Church’” Without hesitation, he wrote to a sister:

No need to argue. All bets are off until the Heart of Jesus miraculously intervenes in his Church. Until then, without noise, without shouting, without taking it out on anyone, you will “gather” in the manor of SaintPré, make a fortress that will hold fast with the grace of God, swarm if the novices multiply - which we hope they will - and prepare for better times. Do for you, virgins of Christ, what Archbishop Lefebvre did for the priests of Christ in Ecône. Go to the

SaintPré as soon as your classes are over. I suppose as early as July 1” or 2

He ends his letter with a play on words, literally translating Psalm 11: “In loco Pascuae ibime collocavit. In the place of the (Holy) Meadow, he has established me”.

It took a lot of courage for the Dominican sisters to leave their beloved sisters and to overcome the criticism and the urgent calls to follow the Roman directives. To comfort one of them, Father Calmel reminded her of the Christian meaning of obedience:

The only problem, if one wishes to use this word, is not obedience, not heroism in obedience, even less panache, but to go to the safest way to persevere in your holy vocation. Only if you have taken the safest path - in an exceptional time, because the Church in fact is occupied by the counter-Church through its supplicants

570-Letter of May 5, 1974.

571-Letter of June 4, 1974.

1 modernists - that one can speak of dbbeissance o.. h’ux

detachment. For it is in this way, in thisti.

have to practice obedience””ie, that we

This fatherly language was a great consolation to b , ,

for those who were preparing for the move and Lf “

Itpère Calmel since 1948 had written, unanimously- ” n (

pjre, “U remained so to the end. P™‘“n

Although he played a great role in this outcome, the Dominican did not do anything to change it.

the determining influence of the mother Hélène JameHll

“e““na.ssa.t lu.-me in all simplicity and attributed the credit to that

recognized lu. …

that truly relies on the soul of your

The foundation of SaintPré was the work of Mother Hélène, whose “soundness of judgement”, he said at the time, “desensitizes by a view of reason in the faith”. -

:es events. For Father Calmel. The work of Mother Hélène, whose “correctness of judgment

A new life

It was thus a new stage in the life of Father Calmel that opened in July 1974, the last one.

For years now, the Dominican had been longing to find a convent or a house that was authentically Dominican. In the last few months, his thirst had grown stronger. It was not only for himself, but for the whole Order. He wrote: “I pray more and more often that a house (or a novitiate) of friar preachers will be formed which will keep the priestly and apostolic tradition of our Father: Mass and Dominican prayer, Dominican study and preaching. “There was no lack of Dominicans of good will, such as the novice master of Toulouse “who has faith and who is certainly neither fanatical nor stubborn”. He was “kind and intelligent” but did not see the danger of the recent reforms of the liturgy

and religious life. This is not where salvation would come from. That is why Father Calmel was begging for heaven:

What I long for more and more is a framed life 1*”™^ mentally framed) with a ministry to suit me. (…) the (” Promltiei

- Letter of the month of June 974.

W-Enterview of May 29, 1973. Father Calmel specified*

““gtandc grace and reffect (I believe) of the gift of wisdom and iiiielligt “e .

Letter of May 12, 1974.

the framework is null: no liturgy, no common prayer, no common life; the danger of straining myself - for nothing - is much too great; straining myself because the study is no longer balanced for lack of common liturgical prayer and for lack of ministry. I dare to hope of St. Dominic that he will find something else for one of his sons who only wants to be a Dominican until death™.

Heaven’s answer came to him through the foundation of SaintPré which opened its doors to him. It should be noted that his immediate superior, Father Rzewuski, understood very well the intentions of his confrere. This is to his credit. Father Rzewuski approved of my going to live with the sisters - or to Ecône - because he saw very well that I could not remain at Prouilhe without common liturgical prayer - nor a shadow of ministry - nor common conversation. And he confirms my feeling that it is impossible that the convent of

Toulouse, in spite of its seven novices and a minimum of rule, take over the liturgy of the Order'".

Father Calmel had to delay his departure somewhat in order to settle some business and to guide two seminarians from Ecône who were making their ordination retreat at his house. But as soon as he had the date of the foundation of Saint-Pre, he was able to write his joy;

It is on Sunday evening, the 7th or on the 8th in the morning that I leave for SaintPré.

I am also looking forward to it. (...) Father Rzewuski, my superior, is in complete agreement. I saw him yesterday on my way back from Narbonne. I understood that he was sorry I was leaving. But he is right and he is good enough to admit it without difficulty. He told me to tell my provincial, making it clear that he agrees with me. I just did it. The provincial will say amen, that is all I ask of him™.

It was thus as an assignee of the vicariate of Prouilhe that Father Calmel went to Brignoles. The directory of the Dominican province of Toulouse of January 1, 1975, bears on page 35: vicariate of Prouilhe, house of Saint Dominic.

- Father Ceslas Rzewuski, superior of the house.

- Father Gebhard Behler, chaplain and ordinary confessor of the nuns.

Outside the house:

- Father Thomas Calmel, SaintPré, La Celle, 83170, Brignoles.

576-L<:ttrcdul9mail974.

577-Letter of June 4, 1974.

578 - Slow of June 24 W4. At this oci^ion Father Calmel noted the fraternal aflfcction which united him

you forever. I fear my inadequacy to your dessetas mo! cience. but you have overcome it, I believe, lixemple of'your Lrm™*' confirm it. So I don't want to be frightened anymore. Make me 1' * T

Heal me. Lord, from these fears at the feeling of U separation of my soul and my flesh, for it is you, and not the old Adam, who are the master of all flesh. ' ^

To give myself to you with my imperfections. To know in you my possibilities of absurd dazzle and vertigo".

It was in these inner dispositions that Father Calmcl was to leave the vicariate of Prouilhe where he had resided since 1967.

On July 1, 1974, two sisters came to pick up his canteens with the van that their prioress had kindly lent them for the occasion. They put the trunks at the Castelnaudary train station, while Father Calmel took himself by train to Marseille on Saturday, July 7, where he was picked up in the community's famous 2CV and driven to Brignoles. A new smile of Providence, the servant of God was going to end his days in Provence, where he had begun his Dominican life, in the shadow of St. Mary Magdalene and in the company of the community.

Mary Magdalene and in the grace of his contemplative life.

When he arrived at SaintPré, the sisters were very surprised by his appearance. He was very pale, more frail than ever, and ill. He seemed to have suffered a lot. But there was a deep joy and a good smile in his eyes.

Above the front door stood a statue of the Virgin Mary who seemed to be waiting for the newcomers. When he saw it, Father Calmel exclaimed, “This house is a pure gift from the Immaculate Heart of Mary. “He led the community into the chapel where he intoned the Magnificat.

Then he wanted to bless the place. He blessed a bucket of water with which he sprinkled all the corners of the house. The brush seemed too timid for him, so he even threw the water with his hand!

The next day, Sunday, July 8, for his first Mass at SaintPré, the Dominican gave the tone that had always been his:

Confidence - Hope.

To give Jesus the honor of not being afraid of anything, because of him. It is not a question of will, but of humility and prayer.

He was very keen to keep the sisters in peace, in modesty and humility, in a simple and joyful union with God. The advice he gave them on this occasion is well summarized in the notes of two of them, taken in July 1974;

In this time of the Apocalypse, the more tragic or confused or lamentable the situations are, the more we must refuse tragedy, sadness or confusion. To do this, we must be rooted in Love and sing: In caritate radicati etfundati (rooted and founded in charity).

To flee from all the faces of fear and all forms of disgust with life… True disciples learn to believe in God’s tenderness, to

hide in God in prayer, to remain at peace in spite of all the causes of trouble and the threats that weigh on our world, which has become disoriented because it has become apostate.

A few days after his arrival, he could express his joy:

The conditions of spiritual and fraternal life, with 22 or 23 sisters (I don't remember) (in fact 26) are as favorable as possible. I finally have a Dominican setting for prayer. The "apprentices" (novices) are as greedy as little hungry birds. May Our Lady grant me not to disappoint them.

Vernette arrives tomorrow and will do the work where he excels as a wise architect for the chapel and for everything®™.

In the same letter, Father Calmel also rejoiced that he found no animosity among the sisters towards the "administrator" (Mother Marie-Rose Tassy) appointed by Rome, nor towards the sisters who had not dared to take the step. He himself would never speak of it afterwards. Moreover, the novitiate was finally escaping the "factory life" that had become the house of the Annunciation near Toulouse, and could finally be supported by "a real manager of the house".

July 1, 1974.

liturgical prayer "Life late. May we

may a benediction not spoil you

". can he write some

“put gift of the heart

Mother Helene summed up the cheerfulness and gratitude written just after Father Calmel’s arrival;

all in these

lines

Here we are, Mary, twenty-six s

gathered together, by the grace of the Heart, perfectly in agreement and delighted

We believe we are dreaming after the trials of the past days. Post nubila Phabus is the inscription under the statue of the Virgin at the entrance door. After the clouds, the sun. Our Sun is the Lord, may he illuminate our hearts docile to the teaching of his apostle and our Father.

The first months of life at SaintPré were not lacking in salt, not only because of the work and the precariousness of the installation, but also because of the temperament of Father Calmel. The Sisters still bring back some fioretti that give a good idea of the character.

Every morning at 7:00 a.m., Father celebrated Mass according to the Dominican rite in a small oratory near his home. He always said a short word according to the feast or the liturgical texts, a short word that gave the assistants a light for the day:

- The prayer of Christ: in Jesus there is more than his prayer, there is his action, in us, in each communion.

- Grace blossoms into bliss in everyone, not just in a few saints, but in everyone, in the least Christian.

- Detachment and renunciation have no reason to be except to make us live the spirit of childhood…

When the students were present, the older ones who wished could be awakened to attend these morning masses.

On special occasions, the chaplain of the house, Canon Cutajar, invited Father Calmel to celebrate sung Mass. Alas, his voice did not improve with age! In the sacristy, before the ceremony, a sister had him repeat the first two words of the Gloria. When the time came to sing, he was given the first two notes. One day, he left in a tone of voice.

July 14, 1974. July 30, 1974.

that no one could take back. Four sisters tried in succession to leave, in vain. All the sisters could not hold back a fit of rage. He, smiling and calm, was waiting at the altar. One sister hummed the intonation and the choir continued.

The morning was devoted to work in his office in front of the Novitiate, sheltered by the “harp of the cypresses”. It was there that on July 22, 1974, he finished writing the second volume of the Mysteries of the Kingdom of Grace, his last book. When he was writing, he pressed so hard on the pen that he often broke it. “The pen did not hold! “he would say ingenuously.

Almost every day he gave a “little course to the novices” - “little” he said, in comparison with the courses of the Dominican fathers’ Studium. Of course, the former novice and student brother of Saint-Maximin could not help comparing the new institution with what he had known in the past. For example, compared to the recreations of his novitiate, those of the sisters seemed insignificant. “We others were rebuilding the world, destroying and rebuilding! “

At noon, he recited the office of Sext in the community chapel, with the volunteers who were free.

In the afternoons, Father Calmel would walk down the aisle with a casual step. One day, when he met a sister, he confided to her: “I am drained, but I have to move forward. Otherwise the machine might stop. “To a sister he asked the painful question: “But how is it that I am all alone?” She

replied: “Father, it is God’s choice, it is a grace,” to which he replied sharply: “undeserved, undeserved… “

During the first summer at SaintPré, the community met two or three times a week. The Father commented on the psalms of the day’s vespers, very freely. He passed on his great love of the liturgy and strongly encouraged the children to pray through the liturgy. He even invited the sisters, as a private devotion, to say a few hours of the Breviary during the vacations.

His teaching was both very strong, doctrinal and theological, but he was also very cheerful. He liked to make jokes. He had a very cordial, warm relationship with everyone, a good laugh and a lot of humor. He multiplied the puns. In his simplicity, he shared his readings and his work. “I wrote such and such an article”, “I read such and such a book”. Or he would talk about the poems he wrote, for example, those on Saint Martin, Saint Athanasius,

Saint Hilaire, or. to link cheerfulness to the seriousness of the situation, the one entitled “La solitude, c’est charmant” which he sang to the tune of Cadet Roussel

One day, images of Saint Theresa of the Child Jesus were presented to Father Calmel. He retorted sharply: “I don’t want the good Norman (with big pink cheeks). But I want her with a crucifix, like a nun given to Jesus. “

When asked a question, he would answer very briefly on scraps of paper or on the back of an envelope. Thus, a sister kept on a piece of paper some very judicious notes on Kant and the modern philosophers.

On his side, he annotated everything, books, articles, with a blue or red pencil, with sometimes very tasty comments.

To the sister who was teaching German, he gave advice that could be summed up in this: make Catholic Germany known. Having studied German in the minor seminary, he could point her to good authors and lives of saints. In general, he urged the sisters who teach Anglo-Saxon languages to see the consequences of Protestantism in society and in the Church. U asked the sister to write to Bishop Graber of Regensburg and ask for his booklet on St. Athanasius. He liked to recite poems (Heine, Goethe) which he enjoyed. But with his strong accent from the Lot-et-Garonne, the beautiful language of Goethe was suffering the martyrdom!

He often attended vespers and compline in the choir of the great chapel. He led the psalmody, the common prayer, as

when the matins bell rang. The four novices found themselves alone in the chapel with Father Calmel. He signaled to begin despite the absence of the mothers. But he intoned in a tone that was much too low, leaving the novices in great perplexity. When the sisters finally arrived, they laughed at the situation. And he, for his part, was pleased with his move.

One evening at Compline, while he was blessing the community, the goupillon slipped out of his hand and fell on the back of Sister Marie-Joseph. Father

continued unperturbed, while the sisters went into an irresistible fit of laughter.

To give Father Calmel a rest, the Sisters sometimes took him, as in the past to Toulon, to some hill in the vicinity where he could enjoy the fresh air and the silence. As soon as the door of the 2CV was closed, he began to pray: the rosary, the litanies of the Blessed Virgin, the Salve chanted, YJveRegiiu celonmi, *etc.* He was always in prayer. He was always at prayer. In a way, he had a restless, thirsty soul, always in search of God and his light. Moreover, even during recess, he hated empty phrases, silly laughter. When this happened in his environment, he shut down. He was no longer there.

Of course, Father Calmel's shortcomings became more apparent during these frequent contacts. He was lively, vibrant in his indignation, sometimes made harsh, though true, judgments, and had somewhat hurtful words. With regard to modern priests, for example, he sometimes used harsh or ironic expressions. Above all, he stigmatized people who were "quietly installed in their nest". Nevertheless, as soon as it seemed to him that he had crossed the line, he would apologize. When he spoke of the Dominicans, he deplored their doctrinal and moral decadence, but he did not feel sorry for the treatment they had given him. He was happy to talk about Saint-Maximin, of which he had very good memories.

The Dominican's presence at SaintPré allowed him to accentuate his spiritual direction to the nuns who requested

it. Whatever work he was doing, he was always ready to interrupt himself if they needed him. “11 was our spiritual father,” said one of them, “always very available, attentive, paternal. “

As usual, Father Calmel’s direction was in one word: learning to pray, to stand before God. He constantly encouraged people to give themselves up to the interior life, to union with God, not to be afraid of God. “Courage - peace - lightness” was a refrain. “A little sheep of the good Lord lets itself be led. “Keep the inner joy, know how to rite of oneself, do not dwell on the difficulties, sing in your heart. Above all, drive out sadness. Make sure you are not tense and worried. Obey the rule, but take it easy. Go and play the flute on the hill or draw, to keep the joy of the heart and the inner song. No scruples, freedom with God. “Do not rely on yourself, do not insult yourself, make sure you sing inwardly.... Always remain animated by that simple valour that springs from love… Courage and peace, little sheep of the good Shepherd. “

The religious willingly directed souls to the act of offering themselves to the merciful love of Saint Therese of the Child Jesus. To a sister tempted by anger or by disproportionate indignation, he advised: “Say the act often. We will only be purified if the Beloved pours his love into our hearts. “On his last trip to Marseilles, he said to the sister who was driving the 2CV: “You remember the act of offering > Let us say it together,”

In the confessional, he was very encouraging. Rcgtcttet sin, of course, but Our Lord does not take it into account any more if one regrets it and remains united to him. He did not

want a bride of Christ to be afraid of her God. “Rather, be in gtatitude. Thank the Lord for what he has done with you.

Unlike directors or superiors who believe themselves authorized to exert moral pressure on souls, Father Calmel “left us free. He had a paternal authority of the evangelical order. He put reality before our eyes and we adhered to it. “He himself kept a great reserve and a great humility. He was very present to the soul that opened up to him, very at ease, certainly, “he was not afraid to tell us the depths of our soul”, however, “he effaced himself before the Lord and his grace”.

Father Calmel was fully aware of his responsibility to all of them. He represented to them their common father, St. Dominic. He had the opportunity to summarize and formulate his thoughts before all the sisters during the community retreat he preached from August 21 to 28. He exhorted the sisters to be more and more what they are; Spouses and servants of Christ - religious - contemplatives - zealous for the honor of the Church - in a Dominican congregation. This implies being “rooted in the liturgy”, maintaining an intense life of prayer and a study of dogma “both learned and pious”. It is then that they will be able to and must call souls, ask them to God and make them grow.

He spoke of abundance of heart. And it could not be otherwise. Exhausted, very much bothered by the heat and by the noise of the work, he asked the novice mistress: “What do you want me to tell you? After each instruction, he said to her, “And now, what do you want me to tell them? And the instructions came like that.

In truth, Father Calmel was out of breath. If his soul rejoiced to be in SaintPré, his body, worn out by illness and work, suffered greatly. He was a soul of fire in a dilapidated body.

To the sisters he liked to repeat: “I am only on probation. “That is why it was necessary to send him urgently

the sick man to rest. As soon as the retreat was over, he went to Saint-Yan, near Paray-le-Monial, to the house of the (àmille Malleray who took care of him with touching attention. His correspondence allows us to follow the evolution of his spiritual life and his health:

The Lord is inviting me to live much more prayer and to bless him within the limits of my brain, which I did not think could be so tight

I can see that I don’t have to intellectually force it. But I can pray and sing. (...) In eight days, I believe that my head will be in great part

I walk, I walk in this flat country of square meadows on roads without cars or tractors. May I live much more by praying and singing psalms during these long runs. Better certain, but my head still tires quickly**’.

At the end of this beneficial stay in the countryside, and while promising himself “not to force***”, Father Calmel returned to the vicariate of Prouilhe which he had left three months earlier. There he found Father Rzewuski “very old from the (car) accident”, still as good to him, as well as Father Behler. However, the house gave him the sad impression of an “end of reign” which contrasted so much with the youth of SaintPré and Ecône!

The son of St. Dominic took advantage of these few days to recharge his batteries with his Father. This was certainly the

great grace of the moment for him, as his physical strength was fading: to be more and more a Dominican saint, to abandon himself to St. Dominic, to resemble him, to prolong his mission. Already a month before, on the feast day of the holy founder, he had expressed his gratitude and filial trust;

The institution of our Father Founder was a special gift from the Heart of Our Lady. It was on the very day of the Assumption in 1217 that the institution was launched from Sainte-Marie de Prouilhe which is in the plain at the bottom of the village of Fanjeaux.

584 - Lctcrc of September 1, 1974.

585 - Letter of September 3, 1974.

586 - Letter of September 1974.

587 - Letter of September 18, 1974.

588 - Letter of October 1, 1974.

Saint Dominic is not only the preacher, but the preacher who wanted to count me among his rubbish… I know that he will take care of me as he did of Bertrand when he went to Carcassonne, as he did of Mannès when he went from Roc-Amadour to Paris.

His solicitude for the nuns continues with the Lord for his nuns. His application to sacred study out of love for the Lord and for souls, his wonderful gift of contemplation, I have no doubt that he will give me the opportunity to participate in it. For seven years I have been close to him, on the spot. One

day I will know all the graces he lavished on me during this long retreat. May it please him to obtain for me to make them bear fruit. May he never cease to address himself in our favor to the Virgin Mother of God who is the Queen of our Order*".

In Prouilhe, he could retrace the path so often taken to the house of St. Dominic in Fanjeaux, meditate at the cross of the Sicairc, pray for a long time at the first monastery of the Order, and let himself be won over a little more by the great contemplative grace of the friars preachers.

During these few days of retreat, I am trying to get closer to our father Saint Dominic. (...) As I see life getting shorter, as I know from experience (if I may say so) that I will see its end, how can I not beg the Lord to do in me - in you, my daughter, in so many souls he has put on my path - his work of love and sanctification. Per Chrislum"°.

11 understood better than ever, as Mother Hélène Jamet expressed it to him in a letter, that God asked him above all things to be "a Dominican theologian and praying".

Father Calmel took advantage of this stay in Languedoc, the last of his life, to see his friends in Narbonne again. Faced with the countless scandals that plague the Church, he told them, "let us react on the level of the love of God, that is to say, let us sink into a life of peaceful prayer, and let us keep the Tradition. "After October 15, the preacher joyfully returned to his beloved "Holy Precinct of the Immaculate Heart". Helped by the life of the community, he then found, he wrote, "a rhythm of going out and of ministry - of study - of prayer (but for prayer the setting is perfect) so as not to strain myself and still render the apostolic services that the Lord expects of me. "The schedule

The schedule of the sisters not only obliged him "to give more time to prayer", but supported and carried it: "When two or three are gathered in my name, I am in the midst of two" says the Lord. The community of sisters and interns gave her "an excellent impression" and gave her real consolation. But, to her great sorrow, her health still did not allow her to participate in the whole liturgical life.

By the end of December, the Dominican's strength had not yet recovered, or at least not enough for his taste. "I cannot say that I have resumed a well-followed study. Besides, I have (by a happy necessity) adopted a less tense rhythm of study. (…) The Lord will give us strength, patience and pabt from day to day", because, in the face of "the demolition of the religion of all time which follows as automatically the college system", he would have liked to fight again and defend the truth. What matters most, however, is love; "It is so that we may love him that Jesus allows these trials".

This aspect obviously occupied the religious more and more. At the beginning of 1975, he could rejoice in the spiritual progress of his daughters, which he attributed to the Blessed Virgin and to Mother Hélène Jamet;

I have the impression that the protection of the Immaculate Heart is well felt here; most of them - and this is thanks for many to Mother Helene… - understanding that they came here first of all for their sanctification and to give to the Lord Jesus what they would not have given elsewhere

Everything pointed to such a deepening. For Father Calmel, as for the sisters, "the secluded life, well-paced by liturgical

prayer, invites one to live hidden in God and in his peace: and this is a great grace.

The children could feel it and received a lot of the spirit that reigned in the house;

Many children enter well into the atmosphere and framework of liturgical prayer in the house. It is really a consolation where one feels the intercession of the Immaculate Heart.

592-Letter dated 18 (

obre 1974.

595 - Letter dated January 21, 1975.

596 - Letter of February 22, 1975.

Father Calmel's solitude at SaintPré remained, however, very relative. In addition to his usual ministry to the sisters, his abundant correspondence, the few contacts with the students, the visits of faithful friends from Toulon and parents took up a good part of his time. It was on this occasion that he had the joy of meeting two "leaders of the Catholic Youth Movement of France. - They were totally separate from everything that had to do with Catholic Action. (...) They address themselves especially to this immense crowd of high school boys and girls. The people in charge are fervent A'Itinéraires: that tells you everything about the place of prayer, of the true liturgy, of doctrinal formation and of dress." To the students, Father Calmel tried to transmit a simple and filial love of God, an authentic life

of prayer and a spirit of victory. During a recollection in Lent 1974, he gave them a talk entitled “Hardiment”. Here are some notes taken by one of the students. They summarize very well the youthfulness of the preacher’s heart and soul:

- Do not have a spirit of defeat.

- To go boldly, as Saint Michael said to Saint Joan of Arc. For two reasons; Having faith, we rely on Christ the winner and not on ourselves - Having love, charity, we do not calculate and we do not hesitate to undertake (e.g.: our Lenten fast, the spirit of service).

- To go boldly without expecting anything from ourselves and without congratulating ourselves on the victories we have won. Because it is God alone who gives the victory - Because he who loves does not have a look for

Fraternal correction is part of our life, either to receive it or even to give it. Be careful not to have a hypersensitive skin.

We will be Christians to rebuild a Christian France, but first, we will be Christians to be true daughters of the Holy Church, without letting ourselves be led astray by the new religion. We will remember the words of St. Michael to St. Leanne d’Arc: “Answer boldly to this false preacher. “

The spirit of prayer does not make souls sleepy, but souls prompt and quick to do what God asks; to change occupation, to stop a game, to do service, to tackle a dissertation, *etc.*

A spirit of prayer goes hand in hand with a spirit of fighting (for God). See the pugnacity of Saint Joan of Arc, of Psichari, of the Chouans.

This oral apostolate did not make Father Calmel forget that of the pen, in which he particularly excelled. By necessity, because of his fatigue and his almost daily classes with the sisters, he could not devote all the time he would have liked to the composition of articles. U could see how this new life was balancing “*, but he still regretted his reduced literary activity and waited for help from Heaven: “I ask Our Lady to inspire me, however,” he wrote, “because I know that this is a very important ministry.

AUez to Saint Thomas

The upheavals that Father Calmel underwent in the last two years of his life did not cause him to abandon this vital niche of the struggle of faith which is the apostolate through the pen. He published in the review Itinéraires articles of great importance which show the intellectual life of the preacher brother. Obviously, he wanted to save Catholic theology in general and Thomism in particular.

The theologian began his last series of articles with a critical note on a last book by Father Marie-Joseph Nicolas*. One remembers how he had collaborated in his condemnation in 1954. Twenty years later, the accuser denied a dogma of faith, monogenism, and was put in the dock. One does not find any spirit of revenge in Father Calmel, but the confirmation of the rightness of his choices of former days*”.

At the source of this “theology-fiction” of the dean of the faculty of theology of the Catholic Institute of Toulouse, who tried to “give to Catholics and unbelievers a book that would put everyone in agreement, asking for the conversion of no

one”, Father Calmel sees “the author’s complacency for the vain grandeur of a certain so-called scientific world” (p. 173). This leads Father Nicolas to marry, at the cost of what he calls “the world of science” (p. 173).

598 - Letter of February 22, 1975.

599-Letter dated February 11, 1975.

I decided to be the public “vigilante” of Father Nicholas for his public book. But I thought I should not let it be assumed that the whole Order accepted polygenism and Tcühard” (interview of the month

, ,ne cautious search “. the Catholic idea ” of ■ r gines ” with polygenism. ”” l““e commis aux ori Father Calmel’s answer is simple and skillful II Nicholas to the books he himself had publfe vi “r’” ‘

ia holy Virgin. “The new Eve, in fact, presupposes

|It is not the original feminine “tion” but the only first Adam, the Word of God incarnate, ^‘dempteur, Our-Seireril ‘ ^7” presupposes not a whole group simultaneously hominized but the first and only Adam, in whom all have sinned. ” (p. 250) ‘

- Saint Joan and Saint Thomas

The Dominicans had become the champions of this intellectual gymnastics which consists in trying to bring Catholic and Thomistic concepts to modern thought. In order to resist such a temptation, it was simply necessary to return to realist philosophy and to put it faithfully at the service of the faith. Father Calmel explained this in an article of January 1974, in which he tried to draw a parallel between Saint Joan of Arc and Saint Thomas Aquinas.

The liturgical oration of the feast of the heroine of Orleans praises her indeed to have been chosen by God adfidem acpatriam tuendam, for the defense of the faith and the fatherland. The truth of faith for which she died is that “God is free to intervene by Voices and by a holy messenger in order to restore against usurpers the legitimate Christian king” (p. 163). “The content of the message is the recognition of the rights of Jesus to a Christian homeland. The content of this message is linked to the Christian faith. “(p. 164) Joan of Arc attests that God has rights over the homelands of the earth.

Now such a truth, affirmed to the death at the stake, is a miraculous response to the great heresy of the present time, “to the separation between right natural reason and Christian faith,” between human reality and the supernatural world. Father Calmel thus returns here to a subject that has occupied him for thirty years, that of the relationship between nature and grace, the latter purifying, elevating, fortifying and embellishing the former, just as the soul vivifies and unifies the body. In our time, we hear it preached everywhere that

- A Christianity accommodates itself to any

tic. A constitution all penetrated by the principles of democr^

or even socialism does not make it impossible for

the realization of a Christianity… As if the lordship of Christ over the nations had no precise requirement in the political order.

- One can keep the faith by professing any philosophy in vogue, even the aberrations of Hegelianism… As if theological faith could normally coexist with philosophical systems that destroy the præambula fidei.

- The liturgy is compatible with any attitude and any music. As if certain musical expressions were not an offense to the sanctity of Christian worship, as if certain attitudes were not a practical negation of faith in the Eucharist (p. 166-167).

Basically, and without expressing it in this way, it is not considered that grace purifies and elevates nature but that grace justifies and canonizes unnaturalness. The religion of the redeeming Son of God is made the guarantee of a demonic life and society.

Faith, prayer and theological life imperatively demand that, out of attachment to this faith itself, natural principles, institutions and traditions that are in conformity with right natural reason be safeguarded and defended (p. 167).

A true renewal of theology cannot therefore do without a conscious return to realist philosophy.

- A master of wisdom

This is why Father Calmel makes an urgent appeal, in the following issue of Itineraries, for a return to Saint Thomas Aquinas. The liturgical prayer for the feast of St. Thomas Aquinas asks God to “grasp his teaching with our minds and imitate what he has done.

The second part of this prayer is easy to understand: Imitate his detachment from the world, his zeal for purity, his habitual prayer… as one should do with other saints. “But the Church asks again: qua docuit intellectu conspicere (grasp what he taught). Would the Church ask the heavenly

Father, in a liturgical prayer, that each of his fds become an assiduous reader of the Summa of Theology i" (p. 90) Certainly not. For

t Thomas Aquinas", Itineraries Vt' 180, February 1974, p.86ctsv.

It is a body of doctrine where everything fits together (p. 89).

It is a question of finding "the internal coherence", "the unity of light that illuminates

\i%omme". What else is fundamental to grasp in the Summa of "eo logy? That which is so easily misunderstood by a proud reason and which is slyly betrayed by modernism: namely that the most demanding rationality must be employed to submit to the mysteries, never to reduce and dispel them. Not a treatise, not a gift, not an article of theSummary^"-^^^^^^

Simple and total and which is not destined to appro ^ ^ 1 ciure

Therese came to remind the world: every soul is called to the perfection of love; Christian morality is a morality of growth in charity (p. 91). It is very remarkable (...) that Saint Thomas, when he deals with this or that virtue, often asks himself if it will remain after this life, post hanc vitam. (...) For him the virtuous life is conceived only in charity and it opens on paradise; its ultimate meaning, it is the eternal contemplation of the beloved God (p. 92). Let us only add that a philosophy, a very sure philosophy, is vitally used in

all the theological work of the common doctor; it is the natural philosophy of the human spirit, the philosophy of being, already formulated by Aristotle, but purified in the light of faith. It is quite visible that, deprived of this instrument, the theological synthesis of the Summa would never have been carried out. - On the other hand, it is quite clear that not just any philosophy can be used by those who want to study the truths of faith correctly and without altering them (p. 92).

Laity or religious, priests or bishops, whatever our position in the Catholic Church, all of us who are overwhelmed by the postconciliar flood of modernist lies and stupidity, let us have recourse to St. Thomas, but let us begin at the beginning: let us make sure that we imitate his example of holiness, especially his devotion to the Holy Mass and to the sacrament of the Altar. This is one of the first conditions to be fulfilled, another being, when possible, the frequentation of the Summa, so that modernism may be confounded and the zeal for sound doctrine may be rekindled at last, in fidelity to Thomism, with a view to greater fidelity to the Gospel of the Lord (p. 93).

This plea for St. Thomas sums up beautifully what was the soul of Father Calmel’s lifelong study and preaching and what made him a great theologian. “Let us have recourse to St. Thomas”, seems to be the last word he would say to the readers of Itineraries and to all those who wanted to resist the modernist revolution.

He returned to the subject on the occasion of the presentation of a posthumous book by Louis jugnet. Problèmes et grands courants de la philosophie, published by the Cahiers de l’Ordre Franfais’^-.

Louis Jugnet drew his strength from the teaching of the "Master of those who know": Aristotle, and from that of St. Thomas Aquinas, who taught him to

clarifies it, extends it and constantly underlines its harmony with the Christian revelation. 11 is not afraid to present himself as he is; a Catholic philosopher^ a Thomist of the strict observance who affirms, with a serene and solid assurance, ready to face any "contestant", that, "if a doctrine such as Thomism is substantially true, it can very well contain the answer to historically variable problems in their formulation, especially since human thought, far from being affected by the coefficient of variability that some would like to attribute to it, oscillates between a rather small number of fundamental problems, provided with an almost as restricted number of solutions-types". For Louis Jugnet, as for us, the value of Thomism is something present - and eternal, - present because eternal (p. 10).

After having presented the urgent necessity of Thomism, it was appropriate to denounce two errors which are in great danger of attenuating or even destroying the purity of faith and the penetration of theological insight. The first is revelationism.

- Revelationism

In this period of crisis of faith and authority, a certain number of the faithful were tempted to seek in apparitions what the hierarchy denied them, a certain truth and a supernatural piety. People were willing to run to extraordinary phenomena without sufficient critical thinking. This had serious drawbacks.

Father Calmel addressed the question in two articles in the review Itinéraires. If the present crisis is indeed a crisis of faith, the solution will come from faith and not from supposed charisms.

I call “revelationism” a disordered confidence in private revelations; a confidence which is not sufficiently enlightened and corrected by reason and by faith. Experience shows that Christians suffering from either “oapparitionism” or “revelationism” are difficult to cure. I would at least hope that their illness is not too contagious (…).

So we find some Christians who give to puerile and bizarre revelations, supposedly received by privileged souls, exactly the same credit as to the messages of Lourdes, so limpid, so sober, so consonant with the Catholic dogma. And what about those Christians

605- “Mists of ‘revelationism* and light of faith”,/rinfralrfi n’ 181, March 1974, p. 17

who, availing themselves of the visions of these famous privileged souls, know much more about the Lord’s passion than the evangelists themselves (p. 177).

What good are these writings that have the effect of “frightening souls and terrorizing them”, of making them “live in irrationality, preferring to the lights of common sense and of wisely conducted reflection stories without guarantee” î While Christians, today more than ever, need to “strengthen themselves in faith, faith in the grace of redemption”.

Christian common sense imposes two conditions before giving credit to private prophecies;

First of all, sufficient titles to admit that the messenger or the visionary speaks to us from God, in the name of God, and not of his own making; which supposes this second condition that his prophecy is situated in this line of peace, of conversion, of supernatural equilibrium which is the line of the Gospel. In a word, that private prophecies, even comminatory ones, are held at this level of elevation, of sobriety, of purity which is that of the Gospel (p. 182).

More often than not, the victims of these false apparitions forget the duties of the present hour, the struggle for the Mass and for the catechism. What a contrast, in fact, between these revelations and the “messages of holiness of the most authorized mystics: the author of the Imitation, St. John of the Cross, Little Teresa”. The lovers of the extraordinary forget too much that the first of the charisms, which stand at the source of the others, are “the charisms of a doctrinal order, like the teaching of wisdom, the sermo sapientia” (p. 184).

In the life and death of these authentic privileged people, there was nothing but simplicity, calm and clarity; no panic, no exaltation. Their message was the least twisted, the least complicated (…) The soul of their life is charity, not wonder (p. 185).

Certainly, the Magisterium recognizes the possibility of private revelations, but only if they are at the service of the faith.

The Church does not exclude private revelations, she only asks that they not be private illusions (p. 186).

Private revelations and, in a general way, all charisms have a place in the life of the Church, a role that is not negligible, not supererogatory, but necessary; it is therefore necessary to put them in their place: subordinating them to the authority of the true magisterium (quite different from the false modernist magisterium), placing them in the line of divine revelation, we

that we are pleasing to God by making use of the certain lights he has given us. It is certain, for example, that a pope who has the Mass "revised" in collaboration with six Protestants (who do not believe in the Mass) is acting very badly and that his revision does not proceed from the Spirit of Jesus Christ. This is certain. In the face of such certainty, the praise that Our Lady (supposedly) bestowed on Paul VI is an illusion and does not hold water. After that that there was (c that there is) a part of truth to San Damiano, we do not deny it. Marti Robin answers to all in religious matter and on anything; 1 answers are sometimes contradictory… I do not deny the supernaturali of his stigmata, but I deny (with all the strength of "'O" "P"'

First of all, Father Calmel attacked what he called the "false friends", the false Thomists who try to marry Thomism to modern illusions. The most obvious example of such false conservatism is that of Jacques Mari tain. In March 1974, he returned to the case of the one who had enchanted his first years of study. Today, he is obliged to note that Maritain has served modernism:

Alongside the great professor of Thomism, and sometimes even merging with him, there is the Maritain of what must

be called Maritainism; the Maritain of theories, “approaches” or essays which claim to advance Thomistic doctrine in the aberrant directions of the moderns. As these personal theories, these “approaches”, these essays copiously use a kind of Thomistic phraseology, one risks being taken in. But they are really modern errors; however disguised, diluted or disguised, they are still modern errors, in the various fields of aesthetics, politics, psychology or even theology or the spiritual life. Apart from certain formulas or expressions, what remains of Thomism in a political utopia such as Integral Humanism or in the theology for ectoplasm of Grace and the Humanity of Jesus? And what is left, not only of sound theology, but of the given of faith about eternal retribution, in the eschatological ideas of the last book Unfettered Approaches? This defeated hell is worthy of Victor Hugo’s visionary; it is the End of Satan explained in theological language; in short, an old heresy. It is distressing to think that the author “died suddenly” when the publisher sent him the proofs of this heterodox chapter for revision (p. 191).

The philosopher even came to “support the ordination of married priests. Here are the innovations that this old layman proposes for the priests of Jesus Christ, less reformist than revolutionary” (p. 192).

We had wished for Maritain an end so much more worthy of his first friends, his first teachers: Psichari, Father Clérissac, Father Garrigou, these eminent men by faith, holiness, attachment

609 - The worst ReginaW Garrigou-Lagrange (1877-1964) was ordained a priest in 1902.

He was then appointed to Rome, where he taught the great treatises of dogmatic theology as well as mystical theology.

He was an ardent defender of Tradition and fought valiantly against modernism.

He was an ardent defender of Tradition and fought valiantly against modernism. It is necessary to take some in eternity to the veUle to correct

WE can only repeat the recorill^/;" S"-.

se existimat stare videat ne codât (Cel,,; - ™ ""^"-Apôtre who

grdedeto.ber)(lColO;epitredu.di:^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^

Barbara indeed invited him to write the preface of a new edition or' l T

Otechismmtimodemhte of Father Leitiius(1910) Fromrfs-" work, the Dominican wrote his intention in a word that defines him so well; May St. Pius X and St. Thomas inspire me to make clear short training - training in prayer, in sacred study, in the witnessn'aae net' and gentle and humble*'". " "

Then, a few days later, he specified:

The preface (of the anti-modernist Catechism) is written. (…) I expand (this is new) on one of the remedies: a contemplative teaching of the right doctrine. For this book is intended (in part) for the young people of Archbishop Lefebvre*".

With Father Barbara's permission, the tevac Itinéraires published this preface in June 1974 in order to make it accessible to a wider public*. 11 It is worth reading substantial passages in order to imbibe the theological wisdom and lucidity of its author. Father Calmel begins with

an affirmation drawn from both his personal experience and the writings of St. Pius X: “It is in hypocrisy that we must place the characteristic and differential note of the modernist. The modernist, it is never sufficiently emphasized, is an apostate doubled with a traitor (p. 140).

After this introduction. Ü should define modernism in pat

Father Roger-Thomas Calmel

We are all part of history, in the adventures of humanity on the move.

No Revelation given once and for all to teach the divine mysteries. No sacrifice deserving of grace once and for all. No new and eternal testament. An indefinite evolution. It is in this sense that religion is called modern by the modernists (p. 141).

Once again, Father Calmel refers to Augustin Cochin to capture the essentially revolutionary process of the modernists:

So it is not the genius of a few great thinkers that has given modernism its strength, it is the perfection of the processes of penetration and domination. The processes themselves are modelled on those of the occult societies, notably the various freemasons. These are the old procedures, highlighted by Augustin Cochin*”, which had already proved their worth during the French revolution, and which have been applied to the Church to devastate it. We know their distinctive characteristics: above all, an authority of lies (p. 143).

An example will help the reader understand the application of this method in the Church:

Reinterpretation, that is to say, a deceptive explanation of the truths of the faith which, under the pretext of making them better understood by the modern mind, stealthily and quietly vanishes them, reinterpretation, I say, has become one of the most frequent procedures of modernism (p. 143)

It may come as a surprise that such a procedure could have been so successful in the Church. It had been prepared for a long time;

How could the virus have penetrated so far into the organism? Three main reasons can be enumerated; first, the imposture of Vatican 11, the only one of all the councils that refused to be doctrinal; second, the progressive occupation of the highest offices by modernist prelates; third, the debility of the theological' throughout the Christian people, beginning with the tet 'u council that betrayed*'*, certain prelates who betrayed, a*^'r, ■ tien incapable of resisting betrayal, because it was ii

debility (p. 145). ®-'-Pu.tually

613' See Augustin Cochin. especially Les Sociétés de Pensée et la Dép".

and Revolutionary Abstraction and Catholic Realism (Descl6c de B. Moderne (Plon édit.)

614 - "On the "time bombs" of this council, see Mer I

p.1%.. (note of the worst Calmel). DMM,

After recalling the "saved contU,

which had as a "disastrous French outcome

attached to the Syüabus. then the advent of dtn el'""""'"'

,eurs modern “. father Calmel seeks the re ”™ °PP “i ^ux er ,1 can only come from a simultaneous reform ^ ”” ”’““hme,

of the Eghse and, on the other hand, of the simple priests and the faithful

Is there a remedy? For sure there is.

ddference to what happened at the beginning of the s&le penetrated into the hierarchy itself. As long as’the hfer* ™ ehmme the poison that infects it, the remedy L”,7. * limited Without doubt, it is not from the hierarchy mute leulT “n’en’ ” nor from the chief alone that the remedy will come. The corL’ in tares organs, must get rid of the poison 11 remains nn’un. f seems to claim that the head finds health (p. 147). ^

On the part of the priests and the faithful, the first remedy will be to practice the Catholic faith, “a public witness with as much humility and gentleness as pride and patience” (p. 149). The second remedy is to return to “a teaching of sound doctrine that favors the life of prayer and contemplation”, to a “theological study that not only enlightens the intellect but also disposes the soul to prayer and nourishes preaching” (p. 150).

Sentire cum Ecclesia

Nevertheless, while waiting for the victory of Christ the King, the Catholics have to make painful decisions and to tefiize any kind of collaboration with the revolution. “The deficiencies of the hierarchical authority, the astonishing power of the parallel authorities, the sacrileges in the cult, the heresies in the doctrinal teaching” oblige them to answer one nm pommiis to all the invitations and to all the threats. Will they not lose their link with the Church because of this? Will they remain sons of the Church? Is there not a

risk of diminishing in them the sentire cum Ecclesia which gives the Catholic his strength? In order to reassure them, Father Calmel, in an article of January 1975, faithfully tackles these delicate questions which their duty of resistance poses to Catholics

they undergo, they “take in” the innovations”. This is very far from Christian obedience. Often “they are abused rather than guilty”. However, whatever they say, “their conduct plays into the hands of subversion. They have indeed given in to disastrous innovations; innovations introduced by hidden enemies, equivocal and versatile transformations, which have no other effective purpose than to undermine a certain and solid tradition, to debilitate it and finally, without awakening it, to change religion little by little, “But the Catholics who hold to morals But those Catholics who hold to morals, doctrine, liturgy, in a word, to the Church of old, those faithful who believe that “the Church condemns revolution and will always condemn it, whether it is called liberalism or socialism,” “shall we accuse these faithful Christians of disobedience? “

These Catholics “refuse to compromise; they refuse to be complicit in a revolution that is certainly modernist. Sociologically they are kept apart”. They are humiliated, excluded from all responsibility. However, without bitterness, they insist that “their fidelity is penetrated by humility and fervor: they have no taste for sectarianism or ostentation. In their place, which is modest and justly supported, they try to maintain what the Church has transmitted to them. “In short, these faithful Christians are nothing other than the worthy children of their Mother:

In doing so, we do not doubt that we are sons of the Church. We are not a small fringe sect; we are of the one Catholic, Apostolic and Roman Church. We are preparing as best we can for the blessed day when the Church, having found herself in the full light, will be delivered at last from the suffocating fog of the present trial. Even though this day is still far from coming, we are trying not to let up on the essential duty of sanctifying ourselves; we are doing so by keeping Tradition in the same spirit in which we received it, a spirit of holiness.

Father Calmel then quotes what his friend Louis Daménie, founder and director of the French Order, said to him towards the end of 1969: “After all, it is the Church that taught me to do as I did: not to make a pact with what destroys the faith. “

He ends his article with a vision of hope, based on his unshakeable faith in the sanctity of the Church:

Everything we believe about the Church and her living stability convinces us that, without too much delay and clearly, she will approve our attitude and consecrate it with her authority.

We hope for a powerful fidelity (…).

Postconciliar innovations are not a matter of course.

our obedience will be manifestly reietedU

Ibccupation of the Church (…). We keep the

The occupying modernist forces will not be able to 0 11’^

the sacred lips of our Mother She

we have nothing better to do than to hold

Patientia pauperum non peribit in jinm (Psalm 9™!!‘naf”**” h”’

The poor will no longer be deceived indefinitely.

Of course, this confidence in no way excludes the struggle, this hope does not paralyze initiatives. That is why, in the following issue of the review Itinéraires, Father Calmel calls the faithful to evangelization”. “The postconciliar innovations” being “a strategic system of occupation” (p. 4). it is appropriate to found and modestly maintain the forts of faith.

Having seen where we are, let us measure what remains in our power. What remains in our power is, first of all, prayer and the hidden life in God; what remains in our power is also what the review Itinéraires has so often advocated: without glitter and without noise, to build forts of resistance, of pious and living attachment to Tradition. These forts will seem derisory; in the face of the apparent and occupying Church, they will seem too weak a defense. No matter. God’s grace is not measured by what appears. It is in our power to erect modest works of resistance and to enire them. So we don’t have to hesitate, with the grace of God. I am speaking above all of maintaining them from within, of the maintenance which proceeds from the life of prayer, from study

On this subject, we can take up all the recommendations addressed by Saint Paul to these tiny nascent communities, these first forts of Thessalonica or Ephesus (p. 5).

To summarize these thoughts, so theological and so practical, it is appropriate to read the last lines that Father Calmel wrote ^ Itineraries L Conclusion of dbi-seven years of

an aposto at in ati^ of one hundred and fifty articles which were the conso ation and me

laRécbmadonauSaini-Kt.*:JcanMi

testimony of clircd parents

s/e<*“idrD/nt.t.u.p.l25.

He had a great number of souls, a legacy that he left to his sons and daughters. After encouraging the faithful to do without any new mass, even if it meant doing without mass on Sunday, he concluded:

Grace makes the desire for sanctification equal to the firmness of resistance. (…) Grace ensures that in the resolute resistance which is necessary to bear witness, interior peace, far from diminishing, deepens. (…) Let them nourish their prayer with the prayer of the Church according to the liturgical seasons; let their interior conversation continue in the light of the mysteries of the faith, in accordance, moreover, with the practice of the rosary; let their witness be given out of love. (…)

For love let us bear witness to the established dogma and worship.

We will have enough courage The beloved God will be our support.

May our hearts never tire of the divine treasures we defend.

The pure and living waters of grace during the struggle will refresh us.

Without any support well supported Let us consume ourselves with love.

The faith with which our hearts are illuminated makes our night more beautiful than the day.

The Mysteries of the Kingdom of Grace, vol.

At the same time that he was exhausting himself writing these powerful and decisive articles in the review Itinéraires, Father Calmel was composing what can be seen as the doctrinal justification of the spiritual formation he was giving to souls, as an exposé of the Dominican spirituality that had been animating him for nearly

The first volume of the Mysteries of the Kingdom of Grace had already shed a beautiful light on Christian dogmas. It called for a complement, as a necessary radiation on the secrets of morals and spiritual life. Theological thought was to be extended to “our return to God in Christ, in steps of love” (p. 156).

Before putting it down on paper, Father Calmel carried this work in his heart for a long time. As the crisis in the Church deepened and he and his daughters prepared to make painful choices, the son of St. Dominic wanted

to lead his readers further into the mysteries of the Church
■

as they say, do volume two, he writes k 31 ‘™mo
^““delavmspn.tuelle.ero.ss^cedeUviespirim?””^

October 19: “Dans les cinq ou sep, chaouT

j, , “is becoming increasingly clear and I have no doubt that second,

feather for the writing: that my words do not tlaU* ”’”””““t

^vélé on the incomparable dignity of life in him of I ” “r >

pj, him: that’s all I want.” ‘ * Pt™“ion with him”

In addition, in the clash of battles of the Church mili Dominic would like to add a wedding of peace ” 0^ l’T”’ ”

,l,^,ér “r^“fÎ07-“-^-Aa^dce)quejevoisv^^

I peace; a study of spiritual life that brings peace. U ask m ” Dune’u,, U count well, indeed, on a pniculSd’^h’”’ light “As for the second volume, it is well on its way; it will be “d me peu*’”. “I see it lighting up from within and writing itself little by little-i’^o ” fej’autailaforce^””. P”>!””-)a.confidence

The task was enormous, indeed. In order to describe the emir, of the smiae - that is the title of this second volume -, it was necessary to define and distinguish between the saving grace, the virtues, the gifts and the beatitudes, to grasp all the nuances of the presence and action of God in the just soul, It shows the practical consequences of the life of the theological and moral virtues, reminds us of the great law of the growth of the spiritual life and guides souls in prayer, without forgetting the serious duties of those who are endowed with charisms. Finally, the work ends with considerations on the consecrated life, the priesthood and virginity.

In the first chapter, he shows how the baptized are invited to enter “into the intimacy of God and of his Christ, so that they may know from mercy who God is and taste God’s love and tenderness”, to allow themselves to be led by the Spirit

of God, to “experience the beatitudes, and especially to taste the joy promised to those who are persecuted for the sake of the Lord and of his Gospel”. In other words, “to be conformed to the image of the beloved Son and, regardless of one’s position, whether cleric or lay person, consecrated virgin or married woman, to be made like the Lord Jesus. “The rest of the book is in the same vein and will only develop this

M«-Lc[trcdu20marsl973.

*15-Letter dated September 3, 1973. ’”-Letter dated November 6, 1973.

program of life. It is towards these heights that Father Calmel wants to lead

Faithful to the guiding idea that has guided him since his student days, the disciple of St. Thomas shows himself preoccupied, throughout the work, with the mystery of life in its indissociable unity, with the “incarnation” of this high union with God in the whole psychology and in the action of each person. “You shall not separate what God has joined together”, he seems to shout on every page.

Charity being the form of the vtrms, forma virtutum, it animates at the same time the freedom so that it rises towards God the faith to open it to the contemplation the virtues of the combat to soften them”’”, the prudence to make it audacious the sense of the honor to make it jump

One chapter deserves special attention. At the end, and as if at the summit of his studies on the virtues, gifts and

beatitudes, their life and necessary growth, Father Calmel considers what should be the normal crowning of the moral life. “Theological Life and Contemplation” forcefully preaches the primacy and laws of the silent ptiet (ch. 6) ;

^^rercmtretouu hope

U inevitable translation of love is the prayer

God without conversing with God in faith. The cha ‘ - ‘-“‘sea

continue in love of neighbor. eUe in-!””

towards God, by blossoming on God’s side in the form of T’.

faith; in the form of a prayer that is not only

contemplative-It is the law of love to hungerl!pL “T

conversation with the Beloved, silence with him; m

prayer are nothing else - “lcraent and

As it should be, this doctrine on the spiritual life comes from the f

“of the Tradition. This is why Calmel supports his study on the É™”

jil, Saint Thomas Aquinas and Saint John of the Cross. But he insists that mysticism and contemplation do not stand beside the real life of the struggle for virtue and the defense of truth. The term “mysticism”, in fact, simply means evangelical holiness. It means “the life of perfect charity, but considered from the point of view of what God does in a soul through the Spirit of love” (p. 251). Now this life of prayer, this spiritual life, cannot be “juxtaposed” with the life and growth of the three theological virtues. It is linked to

them as intimately as their souls. It is simply “life in Christ through the theological virtues” and under the motion of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, union with his life and his Passion, participation in his grace.

Authentic contemplative prayer cannot therefore be a foolish opium. For if silence in God is an act of faith, it is a forgetting of self and an objective look at the great reality of God. If it is an act of hope, it draws us towards the union of love. If it is an act of charity, it is a gift of love.

Union with God is impossible without recollection and interior silence, in a word, impossible without prayer. (…) If the first effect of theological charity is indeed to gather the soul into God in faith, this means that the first effect of charity is to accustom the faithful soul to this mysterious and realistic recollection where, out of love, it refuses nothing to God, “passes nothing” to itself “*.

Since the goal of the Christian life is holiness, which is the perfection of a rhartrX .r 1’_n;,. 1” nère Calmel. following the example of the Smme

“me rie la Grace, edition 1W. p. M9.

consecrated are in fact all oriented towards the heights of charity. The priest, because he is the minister of Christ in his redemptive sacrifice, “has a special duty to strive for holiness, and for a contemplative holiness” (p. 274). As if by contagion, the fire of love which consumes the heart of Christ wants to ignite the heart of the priest. The nun, for her part, “sacrifices that which is closest to the destiny of woman, in order to better love the Word of God made man,

born of the Virgin Mary” (p. 282). By her vow of virginity, she frees her heart for a greater love.

It is on this mystical note that the last work of the fart Calmel ends.

Calmel finished writing it on the feast of his beloved Saint Mary Magdalene, July 22, 1974, in SaintPré. It was completed in March 1975, a few weeks before his death,

“Disappearing into the light

Soon, Father Calmel was going to leave this earth, like a wick that goes out for lack of oil, literally exhausted. For many years, Providence had prepared his servant for this last detachment by a long series of physical and moral trials, especially that of solitude. So he expected to leave any day now, so sure of the one to whom he had given his life. Remembering the heroes of the war who had marked him so much in his childhood, he had written in June 1973;

For the soldier, the sacrifice of life is accepted in advance as inseparable from the heroic defense of the carnal homeland and the spiritual goods it bears. For the priest, possible solitude, disgrace, and death are accepted in advance as inseparable from the function of ministering the word of God and its sacraments; for this dispensation requires fidelity to Tradition and refusal to enter into complicity with the modern system of destruction, a fidelity and refusal that goes to the point of death.”’

After the Easter holidays of 1975, a slight improvement in his health allowed him the audacity to take the road again towards the “Eastern Marches”. To M”’ Yvette Évtard, who had been the confidante of many of his struggles and graces received, and whom he was seeing for the last time, he

made this very priestly request: “Pray for the souls to whom I have refused absolution. “

On Sunday, April 20, the third Sunday after St. Cloud at the Institution of St. Dominic of the Dors ^ ^ ^

It was there that the preacher brother gave his half ^t-Espric

Jes Apostles at the sight of the risen Jesus, joy that nel™°” ** P*da of joy hostile and persecuting world, joy that must know theT ”

visit of the Lord, especially during the final visit of the

Spiritually, this entry into the joy of the Lord must be the result of a process that is not just a matter of a few minutes. ” ,

within us. (…) What must I do, how can I reach this joy? I must abide in you; I must dwell in eternity; my heart must be fixed in vn ^ ™ ‘ P”

… .J, in you. I have to

receive your V,sue:,terumvidefcyosetyuudeto cor vesmrnKje^is

If I pay attention to you, if I seek only to live for love, if I put aside myself, my worries and my vain imaginations, then I will be ready to receive your visit (…). (…) If I pay attention to you, if I seek only to live for love, if I put aside myself, my worries and my vain imaginations, then I will be ready for your visit; irerant videbo vos and this visit, which takes me far beyond myself, leads me into your ineffable joy. (…) May Our Lady, to whom we say the Regina Cœli Itelaren three times a day, give us to know the joy that nothing can take away from a life given to Jesus and hidden in

This was the last sermon of a great preacher, the quintessence of his thirty-four years of apostolic ministry: in the battle of the earth, to keep one's heart united enough to Christ Jesus and pure enough to live constantly, through the intercession of the Immaculate Virgin, in the joy of God, not to lose the visits of the Lord. This was also his final preparation for death.

That same day, Father Calmel took the train that allowed him to be in SaintPré at 8:00 pm. During the trip, he wrote these lines in which his heart as a father shines through:

The two days in Paris were a bit too busy and I was not in the best of shape with the muggy weather. But I was happy to find the sisters who are quite alone and who, it seems to me, have too many students (520) although only day students.

When he arrived, a sister asked him if he was tired. U kindly replied, "You don't get tired when you come back. We are so happy here. This is a Dominican house! St. Pre's is a

Dominican. "

However, the sisters soon realized that his

seemed deeply affected. At the time of his sejou

had caught a bad flu. He had to stay in bed in his room heated by a wood stove.

On Monday, April 21, he was able to celebrate Holy Mass. "Joy comes only from God," he said in his usual short note. He could not give a "little lecture" because of his condition,

but he asked for a copy of a letter he had written to Metz about the “hidden virtues.” “I’ll talk to your daughters about it tomorrow, and about my little apostolic tour,” he said to the novice mistress.

The next day, Tuesday, April 22, he was able to give this little course to the novices, awaited by all. Here are the notes taken by one of the sisters:

Doctrinal certainty without the practice of the hidden virtues will not allow us to form our daughters in a world of apostasy. (…)

What to do? A school that is a cell of Christianity. A life animated by prayer. (…) For us, danger of somnolence - or of contentment where we are. Not deepening our inner self in accordance with the framework. Gentleness. No shouting or complaining.

Humility: ask for advice and forgiveness.

Prayer for each other.

Mutual Charity: realistic enough to want to be helped and to help without dominating.

Intelligent and confident obedience that makes the job of superiors easier.

Wednesday, April 23 was a big day for the community of St. Pre. Archbishop Lefebvre was scheduled to come to administer confirmations at 4:00 p.m. When the prelate arrived, Father Calmel himself intoned the oration in honor of St. Dominic. A meal was planned for 7 p.m. with the bishop and the priests present. The Dominican went anyway to the matins recited by the sisters, gesturing as if to say, “The office is more important. I will go afterwards. “

The next day, Father was able to speak with Archbishop Lefebvre from 9:00 to 10:30 a.m. He then noted some impressions;

He is a complete bishop. I knew him to be a good missionary - an excellent organizer - a priest - a deep sense of the Catholic priesthood - a good theologian - a clear mind - a humble man - a man who never lets himself be discouraged - (and what a resistance to fatigue!) - a correct political view - he always reads - he is good.

Unfortunately, the overload of these last days accentuated the illness of the religious who caught a pulmonary congestion.

Hope against hope

After Mass, the novice mistress asked him if he was going to... - f

its usual little course.<<Est.eq “ee’isnecessary.hand^^^

slowly. In fact, the question had been asked more to ensure that he would go to rest. Mother Helene decided: “No. Father is tired. “The sick man, who wanted to work, retorted: “Oh, only after the meal.

At 1:30 pm. he had a fever of 39°6. On either thetraometer indicated 39‘9.

On Saturday, April 26, feast of Our Lady of Good Counsel, the temperature remained at 39°9. However, Father Calmel was able to celebrate Mass at 8:00 am. Wanting to reassure the sisters, and perhaps alluding to Jesus’ statement about Lazarus, he told them: “Do not be sad. This illness does not lead to death, my daughters. “Then he rejoiced at the beautiful view he had from his bed. “Does this look a bit like

home? “Mother Helen asked. “Yes.” he answered. “But in my country, there are springs everywhere, water running. “

The next day. April 27, the fourth Sunday after Easter, he had to test in bed. “This is the first time since my ordination that I cannot celebrate,” he remarked with regret. But his heart was attached to the holy liturgy of the day: “The prayer of this Sunday,” he said to his companion, “must be learned by heart, it must be said very often. Id amare quod prmpis - id desiderare quod promittis (Love what you command - Desire what you promise).”

Monday 28 April, his state was tationary He did not celebrate the ‘

to give work and to sadden the sistersÜleut asked with great temptation: “May nothing be an occasion of pain for you during my m - ^

Tuesday, no significant improvement. Very brought

present spiritually to the community. U said to the novic q his meal; ■ b’ n

Do you like

1”””‘“e,d-others. Communicate with each other

advice, help you, read my books… and ds received lights.

And with confidence, he told her that he could

he could celebrate the

rifice on

592 The worst Roger-Thomas Calmel

In fact, for the feast of St. Catherine of Siena, the temperature dropped slightly. This allowed him to celebrate Mass, the last of his life as a priest, a beautiful gift, certainly, from the great Dominican saint to whom he felt so close. Before the Mass, he had the thoughtfulness to say to a mother: “This is for you, my daughter (25 years of age) and for your mother (10 years of her death). “However, after the mass, he said:

I will not celebrate any more when I still have so much fever. I have defended the mass enough, I have said myself enough that the rites are not indifferent for the sacrifice, and, to accomplish them as they should be, attention is necessary. I am too tired.

At the sight of the patient, the doctor was very pessimistic; “Either we bring down the fever, and the heart gives out. Or he is carried away by the fever. “

On Thursday, May 1, the novice mistress thanked him for all that she had received from him during the twenty-five years that she had benefited from his advice. U replied, “In Heaven we will know who God has used - in Heaven we will know. “Then, thinking of the novices: “Do your little ones like each other? They have to like each other… Tell your little ones to be very brave. “

In the evening, Mother Helene confessed very simply: “I have been unbearable with everyone all week because of you (because of the worry you make me). “The sick man replied, “You mustn’t worry about me. ” And yet, the

thermometer, which indicated 39° 9. remained little reassuring.

On Friday, May 2, the feast of Saint Athanasius, Father Calmel received communion from the chaplain, Father Cutajar. Before taking communion, he said to Mother Helene, “Tell me YAdoro te. “And after the communion: “The O salutaris hostia”. And as, in her emotion, she could not find it: “Tell me again YAdoro te. “Then she had to excuse herself: “Father, I’m going to mass at 7 o’clock. I will leave you alone. You will have received communion. I’ll let you do the thanksgiving before I bring you something. “Thanksgiving - yes, if I can. If not, God will do it in me, I know it. “

It was then that he pronounced before Mother Raymond-Marie Berthommé these last words which so well define the son of Saint Dominic that he had never ceased to be:

Life? life is militia, certamen, beatitudo’”.

against all

-*this hope

Yes, life is serious. The tcrtestrcserl homelands ■

are serious, they are treasures to be catho . They want to be defended by “lZ ”’”‘“S’i do (ruccomme already illuminated by the light of Heaven. Cene^H**” ‘t

^nses in front. In its realism, the u had to look the

face. In its realism, the me^êH^”^*””*’^”’^^‘“guard

without extreme unction? Father, my

- Is my life in danger?

- The doctor is worried, Father.

_ Okay. well, tomorrow morning."

In the afternoon, he prayed the rosary with the mother, "Rene Dominica. Then he recited the Office of the Invention of the Last Supper, asking her to read the responses, the hymn and the prayer. Salve crux - spes unica. "

The following night, around midnight. U asked Mother Helene, who was watching him;

"What time is it. my mother?

- Midnight, Father.

- Ah, a new day begins. Everything that happens to me will be God's will. May his holy will be done. At 4 o'clock he wanted to prepare himself for communion; "Read me the denomination" and then "the second prayer before communion: DeusquL", and the prayer for the feast of the day, the invention of the holy cross by St. Helen. As it was the feast of Mother Helena, he said to her, "Good feast, Mother Helena. "While she was reciting the second verse of the Adm te, he interrupted her: "Sing. "Then he thanked her: "You may leave me. Thank you for making me pray. When one is sick, one cannot do it anymore. "

At 7:10 a.m., the sick man received Holy Communion from the chaplain. He was presented with an image of Our Lady of the Smile by St. Theresa of the Child Jesus. He looked at it for a long time and then kissed it.

At the end of the morning, Mother Claude-Madeleine was alone with Mother Hélène. Seeing that it was the end, Mother Hélène said to her, "Go and tell Mother Marie-François and the chaplain. "When they arrived,

saw. “Then he fell back. It was over.

Christianity sang the Regina Cxli on the first Saturday of the month, May 3, 1975, on the feast of the exaltation of the Holy Cross.

Since Father Calmel was still a member of the vicariate of Prouilhe, it was necessary first of all to inform his superior and to ask him for permission to bury the body in the vault set up at SaintPré. After much research, the Mother Prioress was able to speak directly to Reverend Father Rzewusld who was in Switzerland. Rzewusld, who was in Switzerland. He was very touched by this sudden departure to the Lord of a confrere whom he loved and appreciated very much, and he understood this desire very well and approved it. In his emotion, he exclaimed: “For me, Father Calmel was more than a brother, he was like another myself. “

However, he was not in a position to give this permission, which depended on the provincial, who was visiting the convent in Brazil. It was therefore up to Reverend Father Lauzière, replacing the provincial during his absence, to make this decision. Only after his reply could the parents, friends and relatives of the Father be informed.

The funeral Mass was celebrated on Monday, May 5, the first day of the Rogations (to which Father Calmel had always attached so much importance, as a good son of the earth), and the feast day of Pope St. Pius V, his brother in the Order of St. Dominic, who had codified the traditional rite of the Mass for all time. Is this not a sign of Providence? The 5th of May was also, in the past, the feast day of the translation of the relics of St. Mary Magdalene. The great celestial friends

and protectors of Father Calmel met on the day of his burial to welcome him at the door of Heaven.

The Calmel family was well represented by Jean Calmel and his wife Georgette, and by his brother Simon. Among those present were also some Dominican fathers from the convents of Marseilles and Nice, and long-time friends. Jean Madiran represented the review Itinéraires, M. Barrois the DMM editions. Both lost, with the deceased, a very esteemed collaborator.

The friends of Father Calmel wanted to carry the body of the deceased themselves to the tomb on the hill. Before the last blessing, in front of the tomb, Father Avril read the Declaration on the Mass of Father Calmel:

I hold to the traditional Mass (…). I therefore refuse the XOrdo missœ of Paul VI. I confidently expect the Virgin Mary, the Mother of the High Priest, to obtain for me the faithfulness to the true and unequivocal Catholic Mass until death. Tuus sum ego.

operate against to

depicts with accuracy, inspired by the

Dominic, the father that God had given them - from Saint

filled with the strength and light of his Order, devout preacher of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, faithful and unwavering witness of the Holy Mass, father and director for all those who came to him novus athlela Domini

As his brothers sing about Saint Dominic, may his attentive prayer plead at all times in the court of the Great King the cause of the flock he left behind. ” ‘

Exhausted by twenty-five years of struggle for the faith, Father Calmel had passed away

like a candle. He left behind him a great sorrow, certainly, but animated by a profound peace. He who had prayed so often to be “consummated in love at the hour of death”, who, at all the great stages of his life, had “chosen the light”, bequeathed to his children and friends a strong hope. Death,” he wrote in 1970, “puts everything back in place.

In the presence of Marguerite whose soul has gone to Heaven, how sure one is that all the agitation of apostasy, all the maneuvers of the devil against the Church, will not hold. cannot hold. In the presence of a Christian death, a death after so much suffering patiently offered, how sure one is that nothing and no one will take heaven away from us”.

We will leave it to a Master General of the Dominican Order (from 1904 to 1916), a friend of St. Pius X and a fervent restorer of Dominican life, Father Hyacinthe-Marie Cormier, to summarize and conclude the spiritual and apostolic life of Father Calmel. 11 stated in a somewhat prophetic tone:

After the upheavals of the present time, there will be much to work for and much to suffer for God and for the Church. In these struggles, the sons of St. Dominic will have their rightful place in the front ranks, among the most faithful and the most promising.

Father Roger-Thomas Calmel was one of them.

Annexes

APPENDIX 1: CHRONOLOGY

,1914

11 May 1914: birth Ornai 1914: baptism . 1914-1926

Life in Gagnol and elementary school in Sauveterre-la-Lémance (Lot-et-Garonne) 1926 : confirmation . 0ctober 1926 - July 1933

Minor seminary of NotreDame de BonEncontre 1930: taking the cassock in the third grade. 1933-1936;

Pico XI Seminar (university seminar of the Catholic Institute of Toulouse)

. 1936-1941

Novitiate and Studium in Saint Maximin December 7, 1936 : taking of the habit November 1, 1937 : first profession March 29-30, 1941

Ordination in Toulon by Mgr Brulé des Varannes, in the chapel of the Ladies of Saint-Maur, and first meeting with the Dominican Sisters of the Holy Name of Jesus

- August 28 and end of November 1941 to December 1945

Toulouse

- December 2, 1945 - May 8, 1946

Marseille

600 Father Roger-Thomas Calmel

. 8May 1946-1956

Toulouse; ministry to the Dominican Sisters

. 1954

Sanction and exile (November 5, 1954: letter from Father Nicholas) . 1956-1957 Spain

November 17, 1957; death of M’”’ Héloïse Calmel

. 1957-1958

Grotto of the Sainte-Baume . 1958-1959 Montpellier . 1959-1960

Hotel of the Sainte-Baume

. 1960-1964

June 23, 1963; letter from Father Nicolas

. 1964-1967

. 1967-1974

Prouilhc

July 9, 1969; letter from Father Nicolas October 30, 1971: death of Mr. Matthieu Calmel. 1974-1975

St. Padre of the Immaculate Heart May 3, 1975; death of Father Calmel

ANNEX: BIBLIOGRAPHY

Silo” l’Évangile (Lethielleux, 1952) dedicated to Gustave Thibon, in testimony of grateful friendship. ‘

,bM”” ”r/“a/./f(lmpr.duViguier. Toulouse,5janvicr 1955):

atltctissimis

l Ètolt et sainteté (Éd. de l’École, 1958)

. The Rosary in Life (Fleurus, 1958)

l Renewed Christian School (Téqui, 1958)

l On m roads of exile, the Beatitudes{UEl, \960):Veneral>iliPatriArmando Nicolas Hausse felicis memorUpie ftdeliter dicatum.

l The Rosary of Our Lady (DMM, October 7, 1971)

l LesMystèresdu Royaume de la grâce (DHH, 1972and 1975), t.l., les dogmes, trimestre 1972: Amico qui in periodico suo de Itinerariis tant doctrina docende facultatem mihi libenterprebuit, Sorerihus ordinis qua locum otii ministraverunt inspirationemquescribettdialuenmt, In Corde Inmaculato BeauVirginisMaria dicatum.

- hs Greatnesses of Jesus Christ (NEL. 1973): To Saint Therese of the Child Jesus. virgin of Carmel, martyr of merciful love, second patroness of France, in testimony of very humble and ue. a.man.e grau tude and to honor the centenary of her birth.

Cordis tamquam servus etfilius auctor dicat.

the Mysteries of the Kingdom of grace pMM. 2’ triracsttc 1 way of holiness: Beata Maria semper Vtrgim a g onam

. Theolope of History {i\KAp3X\iàe Itinéraires, 1966,2’cd., DMM, 1984) . Brève Apologie pour l’Église de toujours (articles A’ltinéraires, 1971, Difralivre, 1987)

- Reedition of various articles by Father Calmel in the review Itinéraires, by the care of the Dominican Sisters of the Holy Name of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart (Brignoles);

This is your mother (NEL, 2006)

If you knew the gift of God, 1.1: the mass (NEL, 2007)

If you knew the gift of God, t, li: the sacraments (NEL, 2007)

We are sons of saints (NEL, 2011)

Following appendices

In the appendices that follow, we give a presentation of the main works of Father Calmel. However, nothing can replace the discovery and the joy that come from a personal and thorough reading of an author’s writings. May these summaries give the reader the desire to obtain the corresponding works and to immerse himself in them.

APPENDICES: ACCORDING TO THE GOSPEL”’

Father Calmel shows himself anxious, right from his introduction, to establish the spiritual life on the basis of a solid theology, that of St. Thomas, and then, in the school of the latter, to open the morals with a treatise on Beatitude.

The tribulations of life, external or internal, are in fact marked by the victory of God, by the immense happiness promised by the eight Beatitudes, provided that one has the simplicity to “present and give to Christ” our trials and our wounds (p. 15).

See the first Beatitude: “Blessed are the poor… “Do you suffer from drought? Do you feel poor in grace? Are you afflicted by psychological, emotional poverty, or even the awful poverty of sin? Present yourself to the dead and risen Christ. “Happiness (…) is in a divine abundance and, like God himself, it is given only to the poor and empty soul” (p. 15). In short.

Happiness is in love; it is in love that God gives himself to the soul. God who is happiness; but love becomes itself only through the cross. (…) It is through evils that charity is purified (p. 16).

Obviously, Father Calmel sees love everywhere, as the source and soul of all spiritual life, but a crucified love. Was his reader tempted by pusillanimity to take the doctrine of the Beatitudes as a pretext for settling into a meek and irenic life? He would then be making a serious mistake. Because:

Evangelical gentleness and humility never have a sense of cowardice, of resignation: on the contrary, they show

on the contrary, they testify to powerlessness, fearlessness and

632 ■ R.-Th Calmel, According to

the gospel. LethieUeox. Paris. 1952

of a great lady (...). There is no greater love, there is also no greater strength, than to be gentle and peaceful and to die for one's brothers (p. 19).

The second chapter, which deals with "some aspects of an evangelical life" is a masterpiece of Thomistic thought and pedagogy. Faced with the various dangers that threaten the spiritual life, such as false humility or a certain hypocrisy that "does not accomplish the truth", the theologian invites the soul to consider the Lord:

The two features that strike me most in the examples of Jesus (...): the life according to the Gospel is gushing, spontaneous, "natural in the supernatural", in short it is alive; and, on the other hand, it is beyond reason, it is not laborious and laborious, it exceeds those meager virtues on which the children of Eve lament in reality as in poetry.

The evangelical life is both a true life and a properly supernatural life. Who will give unity and dynamism to this life? It is love. The soul of the virtues is charity,^"7"/j virtutum, itself inspired and vivified by the Holy Spirit, uncreated Love:

But what wonder that the evangelical soul is alive and free, and transcends the narrow and groping measures of reason, since love penetrates this soul so much on all sides and so deep down that it becomes inspired and led by the Spirit of Jesus, who is a Spirit of love (p. 26).

Father Calmel's main and fundamentally Thomistic preoccupation is indeed that of discovering and fostering the true life which springs from the intimate union of charity with all behavior, as the soul is united to the body. All his doctrine, all his spiritual direction, his thinking on literature

and on religious life, and even his anti-modernist struggle, are contained in these principles.

This vision of synthesis of the Christian life continues quite naturally in the Thomistic and very Dominican conception of “the spirit of evangelical morality” (ch. 3), which is radically opposed to any kind of moralism.

633 - Certainly, we should not be under any illusion, such a unity of life is acquired only with time and something of pull, of work, of tension and of more or less intermittence “, What to do then? Follow the

P 28). For “Christ did not come as a moralist ‘

God the Savior >> (n” 2). To make himself understood by his inte T’”

Calmel will proceed by induction. U starts from very concrete examples!”””M ‘ eyes: Christian poverty (n” 3). inner peace {n” 4) Ui! M ” and self-control (n 5), so dear to the Stoics of all I - relations of “humanity” (n 6-7) that one maintains with ks aumTÀ from these few examples, the author can conclude:

Christ did not come according to wealth or power, science or poetry, that is too obvious; but not even according to virtue in the legal sense {…). He came according to the eternal life, and according to its preparation here below, which is the mystical life. (…) that mysticism which is an ineffable, habitual and profound experience of the mystery of God, of his light and his love, which proceeds from the theological virtues and the breath of the Holy Spirit, and in which the virtues are revived (p. 34).

Such a light is demanding, since this conception of morality “supposes that one is capable of leaving oneself totally for

the sake of God and of loving 'in the void'. This gives the author the opportunity to present St. John of the Cross, who "teaches us to follow the narrow path of love, in the void, in silence, in the night, in solitude" (p. 34), and then St. Teresa of the Child Jesus, who invites us "not to refuse any small sacrifice" and "to set out again, whatever the results obtained and the degree of weariness, so trusting, so surrendered, so desirous only of pleasing the Beloved.

The conclusion is obvious: "Only in the mystical love of Christ, because we will start from there and always know how to return to it better, will we practice in truth the morality of Christ on human things. " (p. 36)

These considerations are in fact only the explicitation of 1 Gospel. It is the union with God, "present in secret" (Mt 6), which carries all aspects of human life, even the holy anger of indignation, into the divine life

(p.48).

The second part of the book is devoted to the Gospel according to Saint John, the "mystical Gospel", which "constantly brings us back to the heart, to the "whole", draws us to the center and gathers us there" (p. 5). It is the Gospel of

living water, that is to say, a life that takes in itself, that

and recreates in itself the most living elements of our life; a life in the very heart of our being" (p. 65).

The meditation of the discourse on the bread of life allows Father Calmel to bring back all that precedes, all the spiritual and mystical life of the Christian, to their source, the cross of the Savior and the holy Mass. His emotion is evident when he evokes the negligence in liturgical matters that was rampant in his time, as early as 1950!

It hurts to see what has become of the Gospel in the very act of supreme evangelical worship, in certain masses with music or in certain funeral or wedding masses. “You have turned it into a den of thieves!” and a house of comedy… A reaction is necessary on the part of the laity as well as the clergy, because the scandal is burning! (p. 69-70)

Saint John has the great merit, on the other hand, of reminding us of the primacy of faith. Even before being “ascetics, prudent men, teachers, if God wills it” (p. 80), what counts and is at the root of everything is faith, which transforms our view of God and the world. It is also faith that keeps us humble, in our lowliness before God. It makes us “realize our darkness” and grasp that “nothing is taken for granted, everything is given at any moment, on the condition of being poor and living this poverty” (p. 82). For himself and for his student, Father Calmel prays; “Lord, even more than virtue, give us the poverty of virtue! “

In this light everything is done for the glory of God (ch. 13), and the Christian willingly separates himself from the world and its spirit.

In his fourteenth chapter, in the brand new style of a letter, Father Calmel exhorts his “dear brother”, with vivacity, to “have the courage to be what you are, and as God has called you” (p. 103):

You are not made to accommodate yourself to the prevailing baseness or to make a pact with it; you are one of those who disturb and cause scandal. (…) All Christians are destined to do this, each at his own level. Oh, how they know which race is theirs! (…)

We have simply received the deposit to keep it and to make it bear fruit; to withdraw from it would be an infidelity far greater than the unreal infidelities of certain catalogs of sin (…).

I do not know what it costs to refuse to bend the knee before Belial and not to want to be put into the apparatus to be debased, as comfortable as it is perfected; it is cruel in one's environment to be alone, suspected and mocked. But after all, if one has believed in Jesus Christ and he has called us to a certain irreplaceable vocation, and if one is certain that the first love to give to our

is to witness to them the supreme values of the "e", i

to make fun of it and persecute us, at that time, one does not attach importance to the social verdict. (…)

In all this I have only commented on the word of St. Paul - You are free in Christ", - before him and in him - m u ^ *

My dear brother, how I desire for you this lively and ardent taste of freedom: for you are a "faithful" of Christ; you must be faithful to the vocation he has given you and therefore keep yourself free from everything else.

One would think that this letter was written in 1975, in response to the dramatic circumstances of the Church. However, we are in 1950, and Father Calmel simply and peacefully goes to the end of his principles. His interior life, the demands of the Beatitudes and of faith, the ardent fire of true love prepared him and the souls who entrusted themselves to him to suffer everything for the glory of God and for his holy Church.

Don’t the demands of the Gospel and of the struggle risk confusing or embittering the faithful? No, because God has given him a Mother. In his last chapter Father Calmel puts everything in the hands of the Virgin Mary. The holy Mother of God understood the Gospel better than anyone else, its message of truth and love, its call to the cross and to battle. She gives her children the beautiful balance of charity:

The Virgin Mary will teach us the secret of a simple, adoring joy, open to misfortune and to the unfortunate, the secret of a fundamentally humble and merciful life; and above all the secret of a love which frankly recognizes sacrifice and death as its indispensable conditions. In a word, it will give us the real Gospel in its human and divine purity (p. 108-109).

APPENDIX 4: IF YOUR EYE IS SIMPLE^

This NEW book is addressed mainly to Dominican teaching sisters. It will be of interest to any woman who, by duty of state, leads an active life. The title is taken from the Gospel according to Saint Luke: “The lamp of your body is your eye. If your eye is simple, your whole body is in the light. “When the soul’s gaze is simplified by faith and hope, when it is focused on God and on Christian principles, the “body” of behaviors and activities is illuminated by the light of God and of his love. This simplicity, this fundamental disposition which gives to the active religious life to be vivified by

charity, Father Calmel sees them here in the perspective of the first beatitude: “Blessed are the poor in spirit”. U thus offers his reader a kind of treatise on spiritual poverty.

This will help us first of all to understand souls and to “love beings as they are, both limited and poor like ourselves and yet redeemed by Christ” (p. 11). In this respect, the inevitable dryness that God allows will be the privileged instrument to remind us of this smallness.

In the same way, the feeling of one’s own incompetence frees the soul from “the occupation of self” (p. 12) and from “the ability to protect one’s self (...) to offer to one’s neighbor (and to God) a conventional being”, instead of simply oneself. “If we want the Lord to purify us, both through prayer and through life with our neighbor, we must be unprotected and defenseless” (p. 13), very small before the “father of the poor”.

Moreover, it is spiritual poverty that drives the active religious to pray. For “before I am the one who acts in a certain service, I am the one who is

If your eye is

unable to act. Before my action for my brothers. Jesus waits for my confession of helplessness for them; the confession that I need to be inspired, to be helped by him for them. ” (p. 14) Then, ““yoU vdlieT “*’”’ inwardly always. Again, it is a matter of dispos^‘n .,nce: “The rnth action with the neighbor can beexercised bln’”;; n humble soul and who does not believe in eUe-méme or with a J takes for what it is not. ” (p. 16) ^ ‘1”’ “

Therefore, spiritual poverty generates the solitude that is necessary for the spiritual life. “I cannot want a life with God without seeking solitude. (...) It is only in a certain

withdrawal from my brothers that I will find him. “This is true of every Christian life, even when it is very active. God wants to be the only “supreme guest” of my soul, “even when I am mixed with my neighbor” (p. 18). How can I achieve this in a state of life that requires frequent contact with people > How can I “stand alone before God in the disengagement from my neighbor, while remaining connected to him”? It is certainly not outside, in the fiiite of providential duty, that the active religious will find the so necessary solitude of the heart, but rather in the certainty that the neighbor belongs to God, in the decision to see them only as being in God and to God. Far from behaving as owners of souls, “we admit their secret, (…) we file them down without putting an indiscreet hand on them”. Poverty elects the desert around the one who is dedicated to action, it detaches him from his neighbor and fixes him in God.

Finally, spiritual poverty leads the active soul to silence, to “recollection in God, in his will, (…) a profound recollection, adoring, beyond what can be formulated. “This silence is all the more important in the active life because it must be able to “assume the discourse”. “The active life demands a discourse in silence; a discourse with the frankness of allure, the flavor and human resonance, the realism proper to the accustomed life and yet silent in Christ. “(p. 19) Now the way to this silence is detachment from oneself, detachment from one’s neighbor whom one can only know by

God, it is “the abandonment to Jesus Christ in the human work that one does.

It is the “handing over to God”. In a word, it is the forgetting of everything that is not God.

Father Calmel finds in the last word jij on

pressure of his thought. Mother Marie-Thérèse of the Carmelite that Jesus

on his deathbed : ” To be poor, to be found poor : it is not ^

is poverty. ” (p. 56) Q”””” .”‘f^-“djnce.d humi of a poor heart is poor itself-she istoededeH^^^^

lity, confidence, selflessness, e e ep

need to be carried and protected by grace. It is “an ineffable and always threatened love. ” (p. 57) It is then that the whole life, interior and exterior, will be made “of prayer, adoration and trust”, and that it will reach, in spite of the weaknesses of temperament, balance and simplicity, strength and constancy.

In short, it is spiritual poverty that disposes the soul to the pacifying and simplifying influence of grace, that delivers the whole world of our passions to light and purity, that is the door to the kingdom of charity. That is why it is more indispensable to the active life than to any other state of life. Here love must animate not only prayer and the work of the cloister, but beyond that, the works of mercy. The whole of life is then “situated in love and in poverty” (p. 63). “What God asks is not virtuous success, it is to be poor and to love. ” (p. 65)

Are spiritual poverty, humility and self-effacement stifling the personality? Will they not paralyze action? On the contrary, they appear here as the abundant source of great resolutions and daring initiatives. It is the humble, the little ones who have conquered the world and built Christianity.

“In the measure in which he becomes poor, man becomes strong, he knows that he will not draw any strength from himself, he is therefore profoundly receptive to the divine strength. ” (p. 64)

If Your Eye is Simple gives its reader the key to an authentically free and stable spiritual life, to a thought that is always flowing, to an action that is driven by God and that is inspiring.

In a sermon that he addressed to the faithful at the time of the publication of this book (Rogations of May 1955), Father Calmel preached on holiness. In conclusion, he said what exactly sums up his thinking on spiritual poverty:

To be these children of God worthy of their Father there is only one way, one way only: to be very small. Nisi efficiamini. This is the only way to have enough audacity, to hope enough, to love with enough simplicity.

APPENDICES: SCHOOL AND HOLINESS

The title of the book presents an apparent antinomy. The school, with its agitation, its vicissitudes, its work, the constant vigilance and foresight it demands, seems to be opposed to a sincere search for God and to constant interior prayer. Father Calmel loyally considers the objection and answers it with an apology for the institution of the Church that is the religious teaching life. This is not a religious life in half (chapter 1). The sister who commits herself to it is a true servant of the Lord, given to him in “exclusive belonging and total reserve”, “a religious of the Lord as well as a Carmelite”. Except that “the Church herself applies you to a task”, to “teach the Christian slopes”.

The very definition of holiness gives the general principle of this justification. It consists in “the perfection of charity”,

says Saint Thomas, which constitutes the goal of all religious life. Now “charity for one’s neighbor stands with charity for God”, it forms with charity for God, one and the same commandment. How could it be a trap? “The Lord, who wants you to be holy, wants you at the same time to have love and concern for your neighbor. ” (p. 12)

As a good director of souls, Father Calmel goes straight to practical applications: “First, let your charity be prayerful. (…) Because the love of God makes us dwell with him, stand in him, converse with him, listen to God by loving him and speak to God by loving him. “Secondly, “charity implies silence”. This means very concretely the refusal of noisy fields: “If we allow all kinds of conversations to form and develop in us that come from flesh and blood; from pride or from

635-R.-Th.Calrad,Ao/i-(

<’,L’Écok,1957.

rcsscEitimcnt; of jealousy or indolence; of the conscious or unconscious desire for our personal or collective prestige, how can the love of God not be painfully hindered? “Finally, it is not “in virtue of a regrettable concession and of ill will” that you will go to souls, but with all your heart as the Bride of Christ. Thus,” writes Father Calmel in an expression that sums up his thought so well, “the most realistic action will be conducted with a mystical soul. Thus love of neighbor will make you perpetually fall back into God. ” (p. 17)

Moreover, the teaching nuns find another justification, if need be, and a glory of their state, in the simple fact that they are daughters of the Church (chapter 3). They are mandated by the Church, as women consecrated to God, to a work which is part of the Christian temporal. In so doing, they resemble their mother the Church and participate in her fruitfulness of grace. In this regard, Father Calmel appeals to them:

As a consecrated educator and mandated by the Church, make it clear that not only does the Church dwell in the holiness of Heaven, but that she must act on the things of this earth, on the family and the city, for their enlightenment and salvation (p. 24).

In so doing, the objection of those who would like to see religious life sacrifice all human talents and skills is answered (ch. 4). Doesn’t God demand everything from those who dedicate themselves to him? Will I not be

cheating, confiscating something of my sacrifice that I would like to be total, if I use my gifts and skills in teaching?

With great sensitivity and respect for all kinds of vocations, and without hiding his admiration for those who are indeed called not to use directly for the kingdom of God the gifts that God has given them, Father Calmel reminds us that “there are many dwellings in my Father’s house”. More precisely, he shows that the honest working life is all oriented, in an objective way, towards God and towards the needs of the neighbor. It works, it struggles, but it does so out of love, as “a bride of eternity in the things of time”. Once again, it is supernatural charity, the soul of the Christian life, that unifies and simplifies. Carried away by this torrent of love, “your talents will no longer be of any interest to you except to serve” (p. 28). In the end, skills and abilities are as much immolated when they are used for love in the workplace as if they are renounced in the cloister. In both cases, they are the place of pure love. Otherwise, in the cloister itself, neither the good cantor should sing, nor the good cook feed his brothers.

Appendix S: School

t sanctity

The active religious life is not the most fiiitc cm! u “the bride of Christ, whether in the cloister or in a ‘* chooses without question the best part because. if dlc does not r T’ ûcipe to the most living and pure love but also the nliu ^ most crucifying” (p. 32). In making Our-Seig “curJ’au “ùfcrnclur speak to your cross, think as little as possible. Think of me. of my love to do purely among young girls the work I entrust to you f ‘) Give to the world this testimony of a temporal work where resolen says a ray of the peace and serenity of the eternal fatherland (p. 34),

Still, isn't the active religious life, especially that of teachers, too exposed to temptation? (ch. 6) Father Calmel sees things in the face, he sees the temptation to lose the purity of prayer, the temptation to love children in an overly sensitive way, the temptation to give in to one's own temperament, the temptation to put too much enthusiasm into action. Now, in the face of these temptations, he sees one that is far more harmful than the others, that of pusillanimity, that of the "sin of omission of unfruitful servants". "The temptation to resign.

It is true that the religious teacher is exposed to many dangers, but she carries within herself, in her consecrated virginity, the happy outcome of these struggles. When temptation comes, Jesus says. "Watch and pray" so as not to be carried away by the current. Again, it is love, it is holy charity that wins the day. "You will not find the virtues that life in the midst of the world demands by fleeing from the world and the experience of the world. You will not find them by putting your head under the wing, but rather by having the simplicity of walking into the wind." 11 is about establishing one's life. one's responsibilities, one's experience of the world. "at the very level of the heart of God". Such a summit is reserved for those who know how to be very small. It is a question of "testing oneself before God in a state of perpetual insecurity and untiring trust. to assume in God all the human part that your mission as educator requires".

To help the nuns in this effort of vigilance and love, Providence gives them a support of great price, that of common life

(ch.7).For.this.is.a.vital.element.of.every.religious.river.and.the.Hune

in a particular way in the one dedicated to teaching, and first

aunordrc go” unit

(p. 41). established by the interplay of authority and obedience rc igic

Father Roger-Thomas Calmel

Poverty is also a guarantee of the authenticity of the religious teaching life (ch. 8). Father Calmel explained this in Si ton ceil est simple. Here, he is especially interested in the use of material goods. Certainly, houses must be habitable with a minimum of tranquility, but, he tells them, beware of the temptation of “the love of your own comfort which makes it impossible to communicate realistically the evangelical message of poverty; (…) of the search for prestige which blinds one to the impurity of means; (…) of the vehement passion for the greatness of the congregation or of the house which leads insensibly to the most astute and repugnant cheating” (p. 43). All this is but “a finding of the spirit of settlement,” and bears the same mark: “One does a work of this world with the spirit of the world and not as the bride of the Lord and as one already dwelling in the heavenly City. “

We know in advance where Father Calmel is going to find the remedy to these evils: How, in truth, can we dedicate ourselves to a work of this world and be peregrinating towards Heaven? (…) The answer seems to us to be summed up in these words: let it be charity that animates us. (…) If your work proceeds from love, if it is out of love that you take charge of these little Christians, it will be impossible for you to settle down: love, because it makes you live outside yourself, will draw you out of your individual or collective

egoism. (…) If you love, your work of time will be accomplished in the attraction of eternity and you will be established as not being. You will be truly peregrinating.

Of course, this balance of love finds its model in Christ, for “the Word became flesh and worked in the carpentry”.

The ninth chapter insists on the validity of the consecration to God of the teaching nun. For, like any other religious, she says: “I enter religion for you. (…) The gifts that I have from you, I want to make a sacrifice of them and put them at the service of my neighbor purely for his love… “Of course, for this, I intend to find time “to converse with you explicitly, (…) to spend time with you”. Once again, it is not a question of establishing “a balance, a more or less complicated game of seesaw between prayer and teaching”, because life is one, but of animating everything with holy charity. “It is above all the fervor of love that will enable me to find you and serve you without distraction, that will establish unity and order in my life. “

Here the emphasis is on the active part of this religious life, on the work to be done. For this difficult union between contemplation and action to be possible, it is not enough to love God, nor even to apply oneself to impregnating

^”””■A-tS:Ecolc<

the preaching, here the teaching, of faith and charity II f

“lucid guard knew the work to be undertaken. The insistence of ” ‘

that relate to the sense of sight is striking “N ‘

what is to be seen, (…) if we have seen, (…) if we have” T ””“ù

J. “ous to look >> (p. 49). ” I. L;

ac discerning the diabolical poisons. ” (p. 53) ” ReJa, look of faith, a contemplative look… ” (n 571 p- ” ” ” gence of action and. more precisely, to the gift of scienœ CcT’l ‘ effect which makes look at the things of the earth in their reiati “n this gift of the Samt-Spirit which dorine therefore to understand the work of ^seЇ’

and its laws, and the conditions under which they are to be created, Tl;

It is a religious work, the place of the love of a consecrated woman for her celestial Spouse. In “our terrible times”, more than ever (p. 49j. ^

In order to nourish faith and to favor the exercise of the gift of science, “it is necessary, through the Spirit of Jesus, to lead a theological life” (ch. 10). Now it is love that “inclines one to see well”. This light frees the sister teacher from herself. She knows herself to be a pure instrument, the simple servant of a mystery which is beyond her and which is properly sacred (ch. U), abiding by grace and finding God where He is, in the souls of children. “If you become attentive to the unspeakable groaning of the Spirit in the souls of children, your whole life will be transformed and simplified. ” (p. 57)

All this is very beautiful, but Father Calme! remembers an objection he has often heard and which, by itself, could destroy all the jtistiheations of the Dominican teaching life he has brought up to now, that of its impossibility (ch. 12). This union through love of contemplation and teaching, with all that the latter entails in terms of temporality and contact with the world, this beautiful ideal would simply be chimerical.

Of course, the first response is that of the Church. It is indeed she, the holy Spouse of Christ, who calls certain nuns to this work of mercy. And she does so in the name of Our Lord Jesus Christ, who never asks the impossible. Beyond this theoretical answer, Father Calinel directs the reader’s gaze to a gift that God gives us every day, a source of holiness and strength, a daily victory that makes possible the things that seemed most impossible, the holy sacrament of the Mass. This skepticism cannot stand in the presence of the Holy Sacrifice if you have a lively faith in the Church and if you take the Eucharistic sacrifice for granted” (p. 59). ” (p. 59)

616 Father Roger-Thomas Calmel

Just as it would be impossible to understand the Church and its history without the Mass, all religious life, cloistered or active, would be absurd without the Holy Sacrifice. This “is the same sacrifice as that of Good Friday, made sacramentally present and in such a way that it is possible to receive communion” (p. 59), it is the source of all heroism and all enlightenment. The death of Christ, in fact, “mysteriously, but really offered every day, takes away the sin of the world and merits union with God for every soul of good will”. The Church certainly asks the teaching nun to walk a ridge, and she may well be seized with vertigo. However, through communion, she can be “transformed into him,” into her Spouse of all glory. Therefore, “in the very heart of your incapacity you will remain confident and calm, insofar as you have faith in the Mass and in communion” (p. 60).

It is on this note of confidence that School and Holiness closes. The beautiful balance of apostolic life and active life is within the reach of all those who are called to it, and the source of an immense happiness, that of communion of love, thought and action with Christ the Savior,

^INXEXE 6: CHRISTIAN SCHOOL RENEWAL:F/”

T he restoration of the Catholic school h.t a constant preoccupation of Father Calmel since his early years of priesthood. His close collaboration with the teaching staff only confirmed the urgent need for reform. All the more so since, around him, he was obliged to note that, very often,

“the lessons of the parish school, the boarding school of the nuns or the college of the reverend Fathers are the same as those of the communal school and the high school, except that they are framed by prayers” (p. 12).

The Renewed Christian School wants to give the guiding principles of such a work, so it summarizes the general objective as follows;

That in every Christian girls’ school, whatever its type, the patronage of the common Doctor (St. Thomas Aquinas), proclaimed by the Pope nearly a century ago, be recognized and become effective; then that the school house, somewhat like the family home, be in the image and likeness of the house of Nazareth.

The author is well aware, and he speaks from experience, that the solution does not lie primarily in the order of programs or methods, but in the teacher himself (ch. 2 to 7). Without a rheological doctrine, a Christian philosophy and an artistic sensibility, without a depth of personal thought and life beyond the ordinary, the Christian teacher will be seen to plaster the truths of faith on the subject matter of his course from without, like varnish on a plank of wood.

06 ■ R.-Th. Calmel. o.p.. Christian school remuoelated. ‘Rqui. 1958. reed. 1990. 637 - Uon XlIl, brief Cain hocsit. August 4, 1880.

In this work, “theology is irreplaceable” (p. 22), Whatever the subject he teaches, the teacher must “study theology”. Not that all are required to become doctors of theology, but they must actively seek the understanding of the faith, they

must “excel in theology, at least as far as it is possible for them. “Whether he teaches French, history or science, the teacher sees a host of supreme questions coming to him,” to which only the light of theology will provide the answer.

The patronage of St. Thomas Aquinas over Catholic schools begins in the teacher’s workroom. Let this not frighten him, the angelic doctor will show himself very fraternal. In a remark that betrays his concrete worship of the communion of saints and his own way of studying, Father Calmel explains;

Do not doubt, moreover, the effective protection, on his future disciples, of the theologian who is the first of all and who was incomparably free, affectionate, close to the poor people and friend of the Lord; if there is indeed an author who assists his reader and his disciple for all times it is well Saint Thomas of Aquinas; he spends his Heaven protecting those who, at his school, want to go deeper into the revealed mystery (p. 26)

The choice of teachers will be guided by the same principle (ch. 4). The truly Christian school requires them to have thought out their teaching in the light of realist philosophy and theology, for their mission is “to serve Christ in the souls of children through the task of teaching” (p. 30). The whole life of the child is at stake, for “education, that is to say, the formation of the human being in the moral domain, the right orientation of his actions, is done to a great extent through teaching itself” (p. 37).

To achieve this goal, teachers cannot be satisfied with official programs that are made by pagans and for pagans. They must

a purely secular education, the solution would be that of a mystical and conquering spiritual life.

Idealism has never been an adequate refutation of materialism. Certainly, teaching is a work of mercy, the mercy of truth, which is indeed a charity. But this charity animates a very precise work, “Your service to children is a determined service. (…) How could charity be indifferent to the fundamental laws of this service? ” (p, 43). Teaching must be thought out, ordered, unified, embellished, so that it can truly be a work of love for God and for children.

Such a program is demanding! Indeed, teachers must attain an uncommon “vitality and originality of spirit” in order to be living teachers unified in truth; who listen unceasingly to the song of truth in their minds and souls”, and who “bring the students into the melody and bring them into unison” (p.43).

This principle is of course reflected in the subjects studied (ch. 8 to 23).

In order for them to be truly animated by the spirit of faith and by the militant and dynamic end they propose (the formation of faithful Christians in a time of revolutionary war), the first thing to do is to put knowledge in order (ch. 8);

Sewing and cooking, science and French and the Word of God, there is all of this in a Christian school, and not less than that. But not pell-mell, nor disorbited, nor bottled up. Everything is in its place; in order, harmonized, harmonious, organic (p. 48-49).

Before considering in detail all these parts of knowledge, Father Calmel devotes a short chapter to the framework of this teaching (ch. 9). Here we find a confirmation of one of the main ideas which had guided, a few years earlier, the reform of the constitutions of the Dominican teaching sisters of the Holy Name of Jesus. The family, by its very nature, finds strength and light, and it radiates around it, above all, in and through its house.

The woman remains extremely embarrassed to accomplish her work of life as long as she lacks a home in which she welcomes, warms, feeds and helps to live, those whom she has already welcomed to the home of her heart: her husband first, with whom she lives, and soon her children. D is given to her to conceive ts and to keep them a long time in theanctnaùeiuipieuablede

her body; and it is an essential wish of her being to find a cradle and a home to continue the mother's breast, to lay her child in it and help it to grow. To be deprived of this is a terrible distress.

Thus, in the material realm, nothing is closer to feminine nature and its mission than the house. That is why, moreover, the house is sacred (p. 50) "*.

From then on, the author can go into detail about the subjects to be taught, starting with the most important ones.

The course in Christian doctrine (ch. 10) will be conducted in the light of the sources; the magisterium of the Church, Sacred Scripture, and under the guidance of St. Thomas Aquinas. The aim will be "to introduce students to theology

in a way that is appropriate to their intellectual level. (…) Not precisely to initiate them in a direct way into the Summa of Saint Thomas, except perhaps the greatest, but already to give them the sense and the taste of a theological synthesis and the principal edges. "(p. 56-57) In the light of this synthesis, they will be helped to make a judgment of faith on the world, the enemy of Christ and his Church.

Letters will of course have a special place (ch. 11). Father Calmel proclaims here with a certain solemnity:

We take the side of the Thomist philosopher, and before this decisive class, the side of French, and of modern or ancient languages; languages being studied in a sense of culture even more than of utility. Our choice is conscious and deliberate, founded in reason. The authors, indeed, taught in the spirit and with the framework that we said, make know and feel the man through works which charm us and which oblige us to judge the man and his destiny (p. 61).

Whereas a program whose dominant feature is scientific risks "forming an inhuman type of man, where the supreme values are production and consumption" (p. 62).

The sciences will not be "separated but integrated into a Christian conception of man" (ch. 12), and "illuminated from above", in order to "situate them and use them rightly" (p. 64), because "science and technology can, in the end, serve the good of man only in a civilization inspired by the Church" (p. 68).

638 - "The purpose of the housekeeping sessions is to teach girls to make their homes light and to keep them sacred" (p. 51).

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renewed christianity

The question of the teaching of French U is above all a matter of recalling its purpose, which isr I, of man, and of warning against J™””” literary works which bear the mark of a^cM’ ””f*’

the Church, - which accepted the dichotomy between the man of everyday life: writer, politician and

today as yesterday such a life huma’^ ^ Gold,

se’it the fortuitous agglomerationofpa::i^’:iSr”^^^^^^^^

CeduaLnS;:::::S:;^E other Christians, what we want from our world is that it be

in its profane texture cUc-mcmc. ” (p. 76)

This choice, inscribed in the nature of things, is a question of life and

death. One can guess for what the father’s legal and prudential position is

Calmel, in the 1950s, was the lifeline of many souls during the sinister storm of the years 1962-1970. The future will show by the facts the accuracy of this vision of Christian life and of the school, its anti-modernist dimension and its fruitfulness.

But let us return to the classroom. Father Calmel wants to offer his reader examples of religious or secular works that can be studied with profit (ch. 15). He proposes a reading of some texts from Holy Scripture (Abraham, the adulterous woman, etc.) or from the classics (Homer’s Iliad, Ronsard, Péguy’s Ève, Gertrade von Le Fort).

Obviously, Charles Péguy’s Eve is one of the Dominican’s favorite works. 11 tells us that he has read it in one go five or six times, “and I have not been tired of it” he adds candidly! (p. 107) He gloats. On every page of the gigantic work, he finds that dear harmony, the marriage between the two principles that make life, that of the writer as much as that of the reader^ The human condition, the charneling homelands, the wounds of fallen nature, death and suffering, are penetrated and enlivened by the Christ-King, the city of Heaven, the action of the Clmst in the Redeemer (p. 101). In the same way, the “cmq” have been

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taken up and transfigured into inten™te life>.^^^^^^^^

1 interpreter of the French tradition, Christian light” (p-105).Upoetc”/a-r

the mystic” who

enchanted Father Calmel.

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knows voluntarily to his literary criticism.

literature. One remembers that, in class of third, he had learned Athalie er entier by heart! And his abundant readings, his articles and his books sufficiently show his competence in the matter. However, he considers the Letter most of the time under a particular light, that of the unity and truth of life, of the union of nature and grace. The point of view is very high, essential even, but it has its limits. One may regret, for example, such and such a hasty judgment (the paragraph on La Fontaine is undoubtedly too hasty), or such and such an aspect left in the shade (no allusion is

made to the danger, when reading Péguy, of a certain confusion between the order of nature and that of grace). This was not ignorance but fidelity to his guiding ideef. Moreover, one will remember the delicate and painful situation of Father Calmel. The few weaknesses, inevitable in any human work, are all the more excusable since, by force of circumstance, he worked in a bitter moral and intellectual solitude. Certainly, he had been effectively helped by the Dominican teachers, but he could not count on the fatherly and constructive correction of any brother in arms.

Nevertheless, beyond some secondary criticisms, always legitimate, it is the general point of view, it is the main idea of Father Calmel that interests us here. It is this idea which will remain and which will soon show its strength. U introduces its reader in the Christian and Thomistic reading of the texts and makes feel the richness of the authors to vivify it.

This same principle illuminates the levees of philosophy (ch. 17). From the outset the author warns us that he will have a master, in the person of Saint Thoma: d'Aquin. He points out that, in Thomism, which is everything but a system, all the disciplines, all the dimensions of the being and the thought! are connected by “vital links where each part exists of the existenc! of the whole” (p. 117). And since St. Thomas is above all a theologian the discoveries of philosophy will be connected to supernatural truths. Er summary, ■“our philosophy will be a philosophy of being and a philosophi! in faith” (p. 126).

February 1962. In the number 169 of the same magazine, in January 1973. he did not hesitate to point out: the weaknesses of Charles Péguy, while admitting his admiration for the strength of his masterpiece “< That the noble Péguy admired Hugo - Victor Hugo who is of such a

thickness of vulgarity that the Christian Péguy admired certain sides of the revolution, which is in truth satanic, that<

U father Caimel then thinks of the mistresses of the little classes (ch. 18)

“He asks them to have “ideas that are not only right, but ideas that sing in you and that delight your little ones, at the same time as they give them a framework” (p. 131). This will help them a lot to avoid the danger of moralism (ch. 19).

U then returns to the Latin classes, which will drink primarily from the texts of the liturgy, Sacred Scripture, and the Fathers of the Church (ch. 21). Why study Latin and Greek î

Through the study of these languages, not only to develop the sagacity of the spirit, but more still to root in a tradition, to bring to perceive the aspirations and the miseries of the Greco-Latin humanity before Our Lord Jesus Christ and the New Testament, the liturgy, the Fathers”” and the theologians, to make grasp the universality of the Greco-Latin thought which was providentially destined to be used as an instrument for the dogmatic exposures of the holy Church (p. 149).

Of course, grammar is necessary, but provided that it is animated, once again, by a spirit, by a life that is made of sobriety, objectivity and joy.

The last chapters insist on the necessary collaboration between the school and the family (ch. 25), “which is the first responsible for the education of the enhnt” (p. 159), and then on the political dimension of the Christian life and therefore of the school that prepares for it (ch. 27). It is a question of forming women who, in their place, will militate for the restoration of Christianity. For “the first of the

institutions required for the rebirth of Christianity - even if it be in the manner of small islands scattered in the vast ocean - is the Christian family. And here you see the role of the woman” (p. 170). This Christianity, “a difficult, precarious and threatened thing” (p. 169) demands pugnacity and competence. It requires of the woman “vigor and cleanness” (ch. 28), that is to say a sharp and fierce sense of modesty.

Nevertheless, in spite of the real help that the school will bring to children and parents, in spite of the beauty and necessity of Christian institutions, they will never dispense with personal holiness, because these institutions “are raised and carried by the very persons” who compose them (p. 190). After

640 - On June 19 of the same year, 1958, Father Calmcl wrote in a personal note: “I have never heard anything preached on this miracle (Cana) that went beyond the gentle vignette. I have only read the kerygmatic preaching on this miracle in a language that is not

Having founded the school on a profoundly Christian and Thomistic realism, Father Calmel could not forget that this realism could not be born and last without being itself animated by mysticism. This is why the book ends with a call to holiness (p. 190), to a holiness that sees clearly the evils of his time in order to fight them.

In our valley of misery, all that is just and right cannot endure for a little while unless it is tirelessly defended by heroism and holiness: in particular, honest institutions can only endure and even come into existence because they are guarded and sustained by saints (p. 191).

History gives us the striking figures of Saint Louis and Saint Joan of Arc (p. 192), and other more modest examples of holiness in temporal things. Illuminated in the light of these heroes, the Catholic school appears as the battalion of an immense crusade, the crusade of truth, raised by the enthusiasm of the conquerors. It is thus with a call to crusade that the work ends, but to a crusade animated by the spirit of childhood:

We are so lifted up by the hope of the Resurrection that what is serious is not boring and dull. As for the cross every day of our lives, we must know that it is not tragic or systematic: it is enough to receive it with the soul of a child.

APPENDIX 7: THEOLOGY OF HISTORY

T EPROGRESS.SMEis a theology that makes progress a principle that is sought by itself and for itself. In this

collection of articles, Father Calmel reacts energetically against this myth that ravages the Lord’s Vineyard.

The world being in perpetual evolution, and the Church, it was believed, having to model itself on the customs of its time, the author begins his work by defining the different meanings of the terms “world” and “city”. This allows him to distinguish between the Church, an essentially supernatural society, and the world, even when the latter is understood in the sense of the society of redeemed men, the temporal city. 11 From this fundamental distinction it follows that “the dialogue of the Church with the world, of which there is so much talk today, can never be that of two interlocutors who would be on an equal footing, in whatever sense of the word we understand the world. (…) The only true and salutary encounter of the Church with the world is that of the blameless confessors, the infrangible teachers, the faithful virgins and the inflexible martyrs, clothed in the scarlet robe, dipped in the blood of the Lamb. ” (p. 21) One cannot, therefore, ask the Church, without doing it a grave injustice, to “present an immense interest from the earthly point of view, in helping man to be man… “

The author finds in the Apocalypse the adequate answer to the

(ch. 2). The revelations of St. John contain in fact two truths: that of the “sovereignty of Christ over all 1”

of the world and of the Church” and that of “the victory of Christ over the

MI - R.-Th. Calmel. Throhffedrrhh Itinéraires n® 106, September-October 1966)

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and his henchmen, and of the extension of this victory in the Church and in its saints" (p. 34). The whole history of the Church is marked by the seal of victory, for "since the Son of God became man, we have in him for ever the fullness of grace and truth. " (p. 39)

The commentary on the twelfth chapter of Revelation is particularly remarkable (p. 42-44). The woman attacked by the Dragon is the image of both the Virgin Mary and the Church. Now, Saint John teaches us "that the Church is pursued by the Dragon and that she will hide in the desert;

The Church lives mainly by the theological life which makes her dwell in God. "Thus "gathered in God" by "charity and by the hierarchical powers", she is "as if protected in a desert and does not have to fear the attacks of the Dragon". Irritated by his failure, the Dragon recruits two allies to launch them against the Church. First, the Beast rising from the sea (Rev 12:18), who represents the devil who "infiltrates the political powers to turn them against the Church (from the idolatrous Roman emperors to the revolution and communism). Then there is the Beast from the earth (Rev 13:11-18), "the false teachers, the heresiarchs, the spokesmen of the apostasy", the false philosophies that tend to introduce themselves into the true religion like a poison. This Beast of the Earth would like to drag everything along in a "dizzying rush towards a neo-Christianity never before attained", and he "tells us that the world and its hostility are over", that the time has come for a peaceful cohabitation and even a certain coincidence between the Church and the world (p. 47)

The true Bride of Christ, however, turns a deaf ear to these sirens and remains sure of her Bridegroom, she hastens “to meet the Bridegroom, not by lending herself to some sacrilegious mutation, but by repeating, while her pilgrimage on earth is prolonged, the same song of victory and the same imploration suggested by the Holy Spirit” (p. 52).

Enlightened by these high lights of the Apocalypse, the theology of History can serenely apply itself to dissolving the great sophisms which are prevalent among many ecclesiastics and which ruin the faith of priests and the faithful (ch. 3). First of all, there is the myth of evolution taught by Father Teilhard de Chardin, quoted here at length. Then comes the sophism of a “beatifying History”, according to which “the course of the centuries, or the effort of History as we are told, would be in charge of slowly giving birth to a free humanity that would merge with the kingdom of God” (p. 60). They are finally the sophisms of the “growth of the History” and the “indefinite progress”,

especially when it is a question of “rcch “i,u progress, of “■ r

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the Father approaches is indeed of the most thorny là f won by lapostasie “.danslequel “lalumreinsoleu,r’ 7””^’ everywhere and multiplies the “ratagèmes to obsess 00 ^^ ‘;’

mortals, (…) at the sight of this world which is exactly

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ger is great for the Christian of One Will “to let himself be vain

fear or anxiety >>(p. 84-85). All the more so that FlnVaplieudC is not optimistic, because the road we are going to follow will become a little more difficult.

It is predicted that the great apostasy is to be consummated among all nations, and yet the Antichrist, the man of sin, is to appear” (p. 85). “(p. 85) So, “it is in the words of God himself that we shall draw comfort” (p. 88), and from those who have been given special light to understand the present evils.

Here, Father Calmel refers to Georges Bernanos. While recognizing the limits of the Christian novelist, he prefers, “rather than reproach him, to look squarely at the evil against which he is indignant”, “to pay attention with him to the novelty, to the gravity of the evil that poisons us”. For “the mission of Bernanos was to denounce the diabolical conspiracy of our world against any life of prayer: to proclaim that such a world suffocates souls in series or rejects them in despair” (p. 89). This Elisant, Bernanos resumed

and Pius XI on the misfortunes of our time, in which the devil possesses an unheard-of power, until the end.

(p. 98), and to develop a system of thought and a pressure apparatus from which modernism can

to give a glimpse of power and perfidy” (p. 10®)- , . r’

poor earth, whatever the 1

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the paths it takes,

Throughout history, “1 Spirit and in

I hear them say: Come… “And the Savior answers, “Yes, I am coming quickly” (Rev. 22). This is the theology of history.

Seven appendices complete the body of the work. We will retain the fifth, which summarizes Father Calmel’s thinking on the nature and processes of revolution. This thought was formed slowly in the course of his observations, his meditations and his readings, especially in the school of the great counter-revolutionaries, such as Augustin Cochin. It would soon govern the Father’s attitude when the new Mass and the new sacraments appeared, and then in his advice to his friends during the modernist storm.

It presents the three distinctive characters of the revolution:

Not to remedy abuses but to address the very nature of

not to bring to fruition noble and generous tendencies and wise aspirations for renewal, but to confiscate them for the benefit of destruction and thereby poison them;

not to dominate by a visible authority, would it be tyrannical, but to reduce to slavery by an occult authority, against which the recourse is almost impossiWe, because it resembles a poison spread in the fabric of the social body (p. 138).

The work of Augustin Cochin had enlightened Father Calmel on the play of parallel itorities. He now saw confirmation in this “revolutionary and atheistic organization, a dialectical messianism of the divinization of man; communism” (p. 147) and in the maneuvers of the lodernists. No bitterness, however, and no withdrawal into oneself, come to fill these

reflections. In accordance with his habit, the Dominican keeps his gaze fixed on eternal truths. He ends his work with these words: “The Teilhardian system benefits marvelously the organization of the initiatory church and this pseudo-church has every interest in spreading and monetizing the Teilhardian system. Let us not cease to fight both and let us grow in the love of God by continuing this struggle without respite (p. 155).

42 . The revolution attacks “the very roots of society by a sacrilegious and truly satanic movement. “The revolutionary attacks nature itself.

e beings and things that he wants to pull down to transform it. ” (p. 139) It is the famous îotve and ommunist.”{p.l4d) ^
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The Theology of History is listed in the Revue Thomiste of 1970 (p. 135) under the signature of Father Jean-Julien de Santo Thomas, secretary of the review, and by Paul Ollion in the Lettre de la Péraudiére. The latter highlights the link between Father Calmel’s personality, his oral preaching and his writings. Here are some passages:

We thank the editor for having thought of publishing, now, these pages which are so well suited to the man of today, although, from their very point of view, they are valid in all times and places, in an eminent way. (…) This book is indispensable to all those who are dedicated to civic or political action. (…) From the Redemption onwards, we are in the “fullness of time” and no new era will bring about any radical change in our relationship with our Creator. This

allows us to face the most troubling, even discouraging events of our time with calm and serenity.

Dear Father Calmel was neither a fantasist nor an enlightened man; these considerations are based on a clear and objective interpretation of Revelation and especially of the Apocalypse, of which he shows some major points “on the mysterious history of the unchanging Church of God”, as a true historian and theologian, without abusive interpretations or hazardous decipherments as we too often see. (…) The book ends with a chapter devoted to the “last days of the world”. We find the same elegance there again, this supernatural clarity of the author allows a great economy of means compared to the importance of the result. (…)

What the Lord predicts can only encourage us to “live on the level of Heaven”, because the world, enemy of God and his Church, will reach a power of misguidance and perversity never reached, but it will remain forever powerless over “those who have renounced the love of life to the point of suffering death” (Rev 12:11). (…)

This man, so cultured, who recited Latin verses or quoted poems in almost every European language, whenever the opportunity arose, could not help but make a special appendix on “the classics”. He loved them so much! But it was not a love gone wild and he examines the political formation we can draw from them, while recognizing their limits from the theological point of view.

644 - Father Jean-Julien de Sa

O Thomas o.p.. Spanish, doniu courses of h mciacion. Many people regretted their departure as an oflike in the chtrur of the New Jacobins i

APPENDIX 8: BRIEF APOLOGY FOR THE CHURCH OF OLD

A DEFENSE of the Church, the filial defense of a mother by her son, was one of the main intentions of Father Calmel's written work. Divine Providence gave his servant the opportunity to summarize his thoughts on this subject in a last book, the Brief Apology for the Church of Always.

The work opens with a prologue whose tone is particularly severe. It is because they have allowed themselves to be led astray "by the great chimera of wanting to discover infallible and easy means of achieving the religious unity of the human race once and for all" that "prelates occupying the most important offices are working to invent a church without frontiers in which all men, previously exempted from renouncing the world and Satan, would not be long in finding each other again, free and fraternal" (p. 9). It is "the prestigious Master of lies and illusions", Satan, who directs this "great work, of Masonic inspiration" of the construction of a "postconciliar Church". It is a religion whose dogmas have no precise object and relativize the supernatural, whose sacraments are placed within the reach of unbelievers, and whose hierarchy is dissolved in the "people of God".

From the outset, the author goes back to the cause. It is a false philosophy, it is "the modernist perversion of the intelligence" which guides the innovators. Estimating the

intelligence incapable of the truth, “they suppose rather that there exists somewhere, one does not know where, a kind of elusive religious noumenon about which the spirit makes ingenious systems, indefinitely variable to the liking of the evolution of our species, but always impotent to reach what

is. One thing counts: that these systems, ideologies, theologies are put at the service of the development of humanity; they will be appreciated for their stimulating potential of a grandiose ascent towards freedom and progress,” (p. 11-12)

This is a striking summary of the ecclesiology that came out of the Second Vatican Council. In order to refute this fatal error, should we be content to defend the traditional structure of the Church? Or should he highlight the supernatural and mystical dimension of the Church of all time? Father Calmel is careful not to fall into the trap of dualism that would separate or at least juxtapose these two aspects of the Church. The Church is the dispenser of truth and salvation, and as such she is endowed with a hierarchy, sacraments and well-defined dogmas. But it is also, at the same time. “the sacred dwelling where God dwells”. It has a divine character. These two aspects are inseparable. They are real and distinct, but together they must be defended, while modernism would like to pulverize the visible conditions of the Church (the rites, the dogmas, the structure) in favor of a vague mysticism. The two catechists of the Church are united as body and soul. Their dissociation would be a death.

Another consequence follows from this: the invisible and mystical dimension of the Church confers on the visible

elements something of its immobility (ch. 2).

Obviously the Church grows and develops; it clarifies the dogmas, it sometimes enriches the liturgy, it gives birth to new saints every day; but it develops in eodem sensu in the same sense and in the same line. Thus the mustard seed becomes an immense tree, capable of sheltering in its numerous branches the crowd of sparrows when the furious hurricane is unleashed; but in the end the immense tree always remains mustard. -There is not and there will not be a new Church. (…) Any Church that wants to be new, that contradicts, as does the aggiomementized Church, the Church of the first twenty councils, will be nothing but a pseudo-Church (p. 24),

This “permanence of the Oise”, its “great character of stability” is manifested in the “fixity of the rite” of the sacraments, the “rigorous formulations of the faith”. It is “clear and precise” which are “iterable”, and made even more precise by the anathemas, the moral and spiritual life which “bars the road to the red herrings”.

It is therefore in a double capacity that the Church is and can only be the Church of all time, on the one hand, because of its divine origin and dimension.

but also because of human nature on the other hand, which it must enlighten, purify and sanctify (p. 32).

The dogmatic formulations give an enlightening example (chapter 3). In Tradition, they are characterized by “maximum clarity and honesty” (p. 33). And it is with “greater frankness” that the Church expresses and condemns the proposition contrary to dogma. What a contrast with the new magisterium. For, “one only has to open Vatican II to see that the Fathers have decidedly broken with this Tradition of clear and unequivocal language. “(p. 35) Besides, how can we be surprised? “We have known for a long time that these are texts of compromise. “Not being able to impose everything they wanted, the most modernist of the Council fathers obtained non-formal texts which, while they could not be “labelled as downright heretical proposals”, could “be drawn in a direction opposed to the faith”. They are thought to be the first step in an evolution.

Father Calmel is well aware of the objection, so often advanced, of the apostolate, of pastoral work. To touch our contemporaries, it is said, we must find words that they can hear. This cannot be done with the doctrinal baggage of scholasticism. It was not to this Lenten preacher, this traveler, this experienced hitchhiker that we were going to teach how to speak to simple people, to heretics or to non-believers.

Benevolence, patience, understanding, agility of mind to listen and to explain, but at the same time and first of all inflexible rigor to propose the definitions of the faith: such has been at all times and since the beginning the double law of Catholic pastoral work (p. 38).

The same vagueness and the same spirit of compromise have guided the liturgical reforms. The rite is to the sacrament what the dogmatic definition is to the revealed truth. Father Calmel defends them with a beautiful image, that of the tunic of Christ. This one, “woven by the hands of Our Lady, is the faithful image of the sumptuous robe of the sacred rites that the Tradition of the Church, from the beginning, has woven” for the sacrifice of Christ and for the sacraments (p. 43). Now, it is clear that the episode in the Gospel is repeated

DivideunI sibi vestimenla mea (Jn 19:24). From now on it is the priests of Jesus Christ, not the soldiers of Pilate, who share the garments of the crucified king. By destroying the unity and stability of the rites received from Tradition, by manipulating them according to their whims and fancies, the priests of the Lord endanger the sacramental institution

indivisible and universal (…). However, the tunic of Jesus, which stretched out in one piece from above, was not divided (p. 43).

In the same way, until the end of time, the Church will raise up men to preserve the unity and “stability of the ritual order. Thus they will keep the seamless robe whole and undivided. ” (p. 44)

These are the same relationships that unite authority and holiness in the Church. For a later edition, which could not

be produced until after his death, Father Calmel insisted on adding a new chapter on the exercise of authority to the separate edition of the review Itinéraires (autumn 1971). It was to extend the general theme of his work by applying it to the relationship between authority and holiness. In the name of mysticism and the gifts of the contemplative life, some would easily tend to denigrate the hierarchy of the Church. The Gospel, which is essentially mystical (…), a plenary revelation of holiness, is, indivisibly, a plenary revelation of a certain authority; of that kind of authority which has powers adapted to holiness. (…) The Church, whose existence and constitution the Gospel guarantees us, is a hierarchical society of supernatural life; or if you like, a society at once supernatural and hierarchical of life with God (pp. 45-46).

What to do when authority seems to be patulated, collegialized, one could say sovietized (p. 47) î Father Calmel gives here one of the most important pages of his ptatic teaching in the present crisis of the Church. At the same time as he called with all his wishes for the intervention of Archbishop Lefebvre, he was under no illusion as to the nature of the works of the Catholic resistance:

Whatever the aberrations of hierarchical authority in the holy Church (…), the priests of the second order cannot take the place of the bishops, nor the laity take the place of the priests. Are we thinking, then, of setting up an immense and worldwide league or association of priests and faithful Christians who, having become “valid interlocutors” for the official hierarchy, will force it to take the reins in hand and restore order? A grandiose plan, a moving plan, a chimerical plan. For in the end, this group, which will claim to be Church but will be neither diocese, nor archdiocese, nor parish, nor religious order, which will not enter into any of

the sectors over which and for which authority is exercised in the holy Church, this group will be artificial: an artifactum foreign to real, established and recognized groups. As with any grouping, the problem of the leader and of authority will arise for this group; and even more acutely as the group is more

enormous. We would soon end up with this; a group which, being an association, cannot evade the question of authority; a group which, being artificial (by that very fact outside associations according to nature and according to Revelation and grace) will make the question of authority insoluble. Rival groups will soon arise. War will become inevitable. There will be no canonical way between the rival groups to end this war or even to conduct it. Are we then condemned to impotence in the midst of chaos, and often a sacrilegious chaos? I don’t think so. First of all, by virtue of being of Jesus Christ, the Church is assured of an absolute certainty of preserving, up to and including the end of the world, enough authentic personal hierarchy to maintain the seven sacraments, in particular the sacraments of the altar and of order; and secondly, so that the doctrine of salvation, which is unique and invariable, can be preached and taught. (…)

On the other hand, even in the progressive - but always limited - diminution of personal and real hierarchical authority, we all, priests and laity, each on our own account, hold a small share of authority. (…) Therefore, let the faithful priest who is able to instruct and preach, to absolve and say Mass, go to the end of his power and grace to preach and instruct, to forgive sins and to offer the Holy Sacrifice in the

traditional rite** Let the teaching sister go to the end of her grace and power to form young girls in faith, good morals, purity, and fine literature. Let every priest, every laity, every small group of laity and priests, having authority and power over a small fortress of the Church and of Christianity, go to the end of their possibilities and power. That the fortress leaders and the occupants do not ignore each other and communicate with each other. Let each of these strongholds, protected, defended, trained, directed in prayer and song by a real authority, become as much as possible a bastion of holiness: this will assure the certain continuity of the true Church and will effectively prepare the renewals for the day that pleases the Lord (p. 48-51).

We have therefore not to fear, but to pray with confidence, to exercise without fear, according to Tradition and in our own sphere, the power that is ours, thus preparing for the happy times when Rome will remember to be Rome and the bishops to be bishops (p. 58).

The fruitfulness of such principles and wisdom was later seen. The foundation of a priestly fraternity and of several seminaries, the Declaration

The solemnity of November 1974, the ordinations of 1976 in spite of the threats of Rome, the consecration of the bishops of 1988: a bishop. Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre, went “to the end of his grace”. Without stifling or claiming to govern the religious or lay works that defended Tradition, a bishop maintained in the Church the immutable sources of grace.

The fifth chapter of this Brief Apology defends the monarchical regime of the Church. This is the form of government that best suits the soul, the end and the

supernatural nature of the Church. On the other hand, “government of the democratic and Rousseauist type is foreign to the kingdom of God”, because the reality of power is transferred “to parallel, irresponsible and elusive authorities” (p. 54).

Thus, we find in the field of government what we found in the order of dogmatic definitions and formulas of faith:

Just as Ion would speak of supernatural charity in the wrong way if Ion tried to explain it in terms of sentimental love, (…) so would one reason in the wrong way if, in order to penetrate the mystery of the Church, one were to take an analogy, without perhaps realizing it, with unnatural societies, revolutionary societies. (…) Any analogy does not allow to reflect on any supernatural mystery (p. 61-62),

Now, the conception of the Church that is spreading in our days has the novelty of being a transposition of a false and pernicious idea: the Rousseauist or Masonic idea of society. If many theologians, or so-called theologians, admire collegiality, if they applaud the initiatives of a pseudo-messianism that is a parody of the Gospel, it is because they find the revolutionary concept of society quite normal.

From then on, their theology of the Church becomes aberrant. Politics overturns their theology. (…) It is against this radical alteration, this perverse falsification of the mystery of the Church, that we have recalled the traditional doctrine of the Sancta Civitas (p. 62-63).

Father Calmcl finds an application of all that has just been said in the question of messianism (ch. 6) which he had developed at length in the review Itinéraires. Messianism is a caricature of the Church since it sees “the rise of humanity

and its earthly success as the new form of our religion" (p. 71).

Could the Church reach the point where the Pope himself would say such a thing? Since Christianity is in disarray. "one wonders what major obstacle would make the advent of some pope absolutely impossible

(p. 68) Certainly, the pope could never teach ex cathedra heresies for The question of the pope therefore arises, and of the obedience which all the faithful owe him. We have the pope, certainly, but

not to prevent us from opening our eyes in obedience (...); not to forbid us ever any resistance, whatever the content of the given order or the form in which it is given... (p. 69). When, in fact, the Pope orders or omits to condemn, when it is required, gravely sinful acts which are contrary either to morality or even, in certain respects, to the safeguarding of the faith, he is not acting as Vicar of Christ. It is no longer Jesus Christ who speaks through his mouth.

To resist him then is not to resist Jesus Christ; on the contrary, it is to obey Jesus Christ. It is, moreover, to honor the dignity of the Vicar of Jesus Christ not to yield to him on a point where he dishonors that dignity (p. 70).

Father CaJmel extends these reflections in a long appendix entitled "On the Church and the Pope" (pp. 103-118). 11 summarizes the problem very well with a lapidary expression;

The Church is not the mystical body of the Pope; the Church with the Pope is the mystical body of Christ. When the interior life of Christians is more and more referred to Jesus Christ, they do not fall into despair, even when they suffer to the point of agony from the failures of a pope (…), whether it be, at the extreme, a pope who fails according to the new possibilities of failure offered by modernism. When Jesus Christ is the principle and soul of the interior life of Christians, they do not feel the need to lie to themselves about the failings of a pope in order to remain assured of his prerogatives; they know that these failings will never reach such a degree that Jesus would cease to govern his Church because he would have been effectively prevented from doing so by his Vicar (pp. 106-107).

It seems certain that, too often, a type of obedience to the Pope has been preached that is more concerned with efficiency, with success in the overall movements than with simple fidelity to the light. (…) But neither God nor the service of the Pope need our lie; Deus non eget nostro mendacio (p. 108). Too often, when it is a question of not cutting themselves off from Rome, the faithful and priests have been trained in a partly worldly fear, so that they are taken by panic, that they

first come accuses them of not being with Rome (p. 111).

After such serious considerations, Father CaltncI dedicates his epilogue to an exhortation.

Since modernism has put the Church in agony, it is not enough to meditate, even if it is pious and apologetic, on the nature of the Church in order to stand up to the ordeal

that is overwhelming it. It is still necessary, and urgent, to watch over the Lord Jesus who is in agony in his Church (p. 74). Modernism does not attack from the front, but from below and underhandedly, introducing equivocation everywhere. Therefore, to confess the faith in front of modernist authorities is to refuse all equivocation, both in the rites and in the doctrine. (…)

To accept the new rites, even if it be with real piety, even if it be by preaching rightly about the Mass, would certainly not be a confession of faith that leaves no escape, nor a sufficient reprobation of heresy in its present form (p. 76).

In times of revolution, keeping the Tradition intact does not mean not living, but living in order - (in order limited to our little fortress, which stands in connection with the surrounding forts) - since the whole territory is systematically given over to anarchy. To live in order, even within narrow limits, is the opposite of dozing, grumbling without doing anything, consumed by impotent rage and disgust. It is to do, within the limits imposed by the revolution, the maximum of what we can do to live the Tradition with lucidity and fervor. Vigilate and orate (p. 77).

APPENDIX 9: THE MYSTERIES OF THE KINGDOM OF GRACE, PART I

The author’s intention is clear from the preface. He proposes to serve the faithful with solid and sure food, “the thcological doctrine of the common Doctor”, St. Thomas Aquinas, and then “to fight according to our strength against the most widespread and most hidden contemporary heresy, modernism” (p. 10). Since “with this hypocritical process of ‘reinterpretation’, the content of the whole dogma is pumped out from within”, and modernism is based on the postulate of “integral evolutionism”, aiming at “establishing

a universal religion, Faced with such dangers, preachers cannot ignore the present crisis of faith, even when dealing with the spiritual life. Father Calmel explains in his chapter on the mystery of the Incarnation. Fifteen years earlier, in On Our Roads of Exile, the Beatitudes, he could speak of the hidden God, of the abasement of Christ, with the certainty of being understood. Today, after the modernist tornado, it is practically impossible to teach the ways of Christian humility if one does not begin by recalling in the firmest possible way the main lines of the treatise on the Incarnation. That is why, without abandoning the subjects of the spiritual life, we now deal more often with subjects of dogmatic theology.

647 ‘ R.‘Th. C3\md, Les Mystères du Royaume de la Grace, DMM,2’cd. 1990.

648 - “The first form of the counterattack to be made consists in refusing everything in the modernist procedures and therefore in keeping formularies and rites intact; the other form is to know the mysteries better and to persevere in prayer. ” (p. 24)

649 - The Mysteries of the Kingdom of Grace, 1997 edition. p. 66. note 1.

It is no exaggeration to say that The Mysteries of the Kingdom of Grace is the work of a very great theologian, the work of a doctor who has mastered the theological method. The different chapters follow a similar approach. The author begins with a simple and peaceful act of faith on this or that subject. The starting point of the theology is, in fact, the faith of the catechism. Only then is the reader led through

the theological sites (Scripture, liturgy, texts of the fathers) which found and express the dogma. Then comes a properly theological reasoning which aims to illuminate the mystery from the teaching of the magisterium, without claiming to prove it, of course. After that, the author proposes an application of the contemplated truth to the contemporary world in order to confound the modernist error which attacks this truth. Finally, each study expands into a personal reflection. For the Father is not satisfied with mechanically repeating what others have said, he wants to advance his thought and lead his reader to a true contemplation. “The mysteries of faith are not revealed to us only to be the food of our spirit; they must become the life of our life. “(p. 136) Thus the reader is invited to contemplate the mysteries of the Holy Trinity, of creation and original sin, of the redemptive incarnation, of the Virgin Mary and of grace. Thus, the entire work sheds a strong and serene light on the revealed fact and a deep understanding of the errors of the present time. It is truly a work of wisdom.

It is perhaps in his treatise on the Church (ch. 7, with the appendix entitled “The Hinges”) that Father Calme’s vision of the doctrine and methods of neo-modernism appears most clearly. Since ecclesiology is necessarily situated “in the prolongation of the redemptive Incarnation” (p. 123), the major problem that the theologian faces is that of the union between the human and the divine in the Church. The Church is in fact both “the mediator of Christ” and “the living temple of Christ and of the Holy Trinity” (p. 124), it is “the hierarchical society of Christian grace” (p. 144). Its first character makes it a visible, hierarchical society, endowed with rites, doctrinal formulas and anathemas. This is the human aspect, but

650 - “We do not demonstrate; no angelic or human mind is able to show that there is in God, by virtue of his operations,

of the fiiit of Tinfinity of his thought and of his love, a Trinity in runity. “(p. 21) ” Ccdonnédenotre toi est donc concevable. We say

remained intact. “(p. 22) It is the characteristic of heresy, precisely, to claim “to put the trinitairc dogma within the reach of contemporaries and to ensure the success of religion in the midst of the world of their time. “(p.2.^)

of the Church. Its second character makes it a holy and mystical society. Now, these two aspects of the Church “are here below necessarily inseparable” (p. 131), like the soul and the body, “the greatness of the Church as God’s dwelling adheres on all sides to the greatness of the mediator and is sustained by it” (p. 131). The conditions of this “hierarchical mediation”, the institutions, the rites and the formulas, cannot be transformed arbitrarily by the Church “because this means must be adapted to a precise and determined celestial good and she has chosen it for that” (p. 133).

Rather than attacking the mystical dimension of the Church head on, the modernists exalt it, while at the same time silencing and transforming the visible elements of the “mediatrix of Christ”. They will place themselves “at the joint”, at the “hinge” to “break the link” (p. 145). They attack the “body” to reach the “soul”.

To make his point, Father Calmel uses the example of the liturgical reform (p. 125ff.) To “let their heresy about the sacraments penetrate” (p. 125), the modernists attacked the rites and formularies “in that which is one with the sacramental form” (p. 126). Therefore, “if we want to confess

the faith as the Lord asks, we must not only affirm in the most explicit way the divine truth about the sacraments, especially about the Blessed Sacrament; we must also, in the face of the calculated dismantling, maintain the practice of the liturgy as transmitted and guarded by the most venerable Tradition. ” (p. 126)

Extending the process to the whole Church, “modernism does not engage in a frontal attack” (p. 131). “It finds it much more skillful, and indeed it is more skillful, to pass usually under silence, to relativize without making a fuss the formulas and the anathemas”, to preach a “heterogeneity between the data of Scripture” and the developments of the magisterium and of Tradition (p. 134), to “neutralize the Roman primacy or the apostolic succession of the bishops” by “democratization baptized collegiality” (p. 132). It is the method “which consists in insinuating oneself at the junction of what is of divine institution and what is of ecclesial institution” (p. 132), in emphasizing the first, the supernatural and mystical dimension of the Church, in order to let the human and visible reality disappearOur reaction will therefore maintain firmly, each in its own way, the position of the Church in the world.

651 - In this regard, Father Calmel’s criticism of Cardinal Journet is significant: “The great strength of Cardinal Journet (Elise du Verbe incamd) is to have brought to light this truth

Appendix 9: The Mysteries of the Kingdom of Grace

The great strength of Cardinal Journet (Elise du Verbe incamd) is to have brought to light this truth, and the institutions, the rites, the formulas of the faith, and the mystical life that our mother the Church distributes to her children, all the more widely perhaps because they are in the grip of persecution.

The first volume ends with an appendix on angels. Rather than a conclusion, it would be better to speak of an opening to Heaven, where the angels look with tenderness and indulgence on the Church militant, assisting it fraternally and directing the gaze of each one towards the heavenly Fatherland.

The present form of heresy: modernism, to which the Church must

how the ideals and techniques of this type of society can be translated into practice (The Mysteries of the Kingdom of Grace, 1997, p. 152).

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The xx’ century saw the birth of an impressive number of priests eminent for their science, their prudence and their love of God. They were for many ladies a light in the night, a strength in the turmoil, a consolation in the trial. Father Roger-Thomas Calmel was one of them.

The biography that we are about to read takes us through, through the eyes of this great Dominican, the terrible storms of his time: the aftermath of the Great War, the condemnation of Action Française, the Spanish War, the rise of neo-modernism, the drama of Algeria, the Second Vatican Council and the upheavals that followed it, the liturgical reform of 1969, the painful but necessary choices of fidelity

A great soul appears throughout these pages - but in a body so weak and so often ill - a religious gifted with a true priestly nobility, a profoundly Thomistic wisdom, that is to say, realistic and mystical, and a prophetic lucidity. And who kept until his death the joyful playfulness of a peasant from the Lot-et-Garonne. “It is indeed him, I find him, I recognize him well”, testify the readers who knew Father Calmel.

His example and his prayer will certainly give the Christians of the 21st century the enthusiasm and the strength to take up his torch.

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